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# THE COVENANTERS UNDER PERSECUTION

*A STUDY OF THEIR RELIGIOUS  
AND ETHICAL THOUGHT*

BY

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## PREFACE

A WHOLE library has been called forth by the struggle of the Scottish Covenanters, and controversy has raged fiercely between writers of different political and religious schools concerning the ideals and motives which impelled them. Amid the dust of historical conflict it is possible to lose sight of the essential significance of the Covenanting movement, of the time-spirit which controlled it, and of the working beliefs and actual ideals of the leaders and of the rank and file. This volume is published in the hope that it may have a certain usefulness in helping the reader to get behind what later writers have thought of the Covenanters to the Covenanters themselves, and in directing attention to the religious, ethical, and political ideals which prompted their resistance during the persecution.

The work was accepted by the University of Edinburgh as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. With a few minor alterations it is published substantially as originally submitted.

I have to record my sincere thanks to the Rev. Professor Hugh Watt, of New College, Edinburgh, for his kindly interest in the work throughout; to the Rev. Dr A. Mitchell Hunter, Librarian of New College, for giving me every facility for consulting many old and rare books and pamphlets; and to the Rev. James Barr, B.D., Glasgow, and the Rev. George Davidson, B.Sc., Edinburgh, for the loan of a number of important volumes over an extended period. Finally, I have to thank my father, Mr Hector Macpherson, for reading the proofs and for much valuable counsel and encouragement during the progress of the work.

EDINBURGH, *September* 1923.

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# THE COVENANTERS UNDER PERSECUTION

## CHAPTER I

### THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

THE seventeenth century may with some justice be defined as a period of readjustment—political, ecclesiastical, theological—marked by the gradual subsidence of the terrific storm which had swept over Europe during the previous century, altering the whole course of European history; for it is no exaggeration to define the Reformation as the opening of a new era in the life of the world, as one of those revolutionary movements which have issued in chaos and ruin, and have yet made new beginnings possible. It is a profound mistake to view the Reformation as merely a squabble between rival groups of priests, or a wrangle among hair-splitting theologians. The Reformation was certainly in origin a religious movement: indeed, it may with fairness be called a religious revival on a great scale: but if so, then “the revival was set in a framework of political, intellectual, and economic changes, and cannot be disentangled from its surroundings without danger of mutilation.”<sup>1</sup> The sixteenth century was the revolutionary period in which these changes were made: the task of the seventeenth was the readjustment of the world in consequence of them.

1. The Religious Peace of Augsburg (1555) owes its significance to the fact that it registered the first and

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<sup>1</sup> Lindsay, *History of the Reformation*, Vol. I. (Preface). Cf. Paterson, *The Rule of Faith*, p. 293.

most striking of these changes. It recognised the legal status of a Protestant Church—the Lutheran—within the Holy Roman Empire: it thus registered the admission—reluctant and half-hearted—of the existence of more than one Church in the same territory.<sup>2</sup> The “recognition” of the existence of this other Church, it is true, amounted to little. The so-called peace was a mere truce, a breathing space during which both sides prepared for a greater struggle for the mastery,<sup>3</sup> which took in the main the form of a series of contests between the sovereigns and governments supporting the rival religious systems. But these religious wars proved indecisive; and the fact was recognised by the signature of the treaty of Westphalia in 1648, that the great religious conflict which had embroiled the Continent in war had ended indecisively. At least there was little to show for the ninety-three years of tumult which had elapsed since the truce of Augsburg. The salient fact about the treaty was that the Roman Catholic Church had failed to reconquer, either by force of arms or by propaganda, the greater part of the territory which had in the sixteenth century thrown off the Papal yoke. The treaty in effect registered this failure; for it definitely guaranteed the division of the Germanic territories between the two religions, and, more important still, recognised the sovereign status of the new Protestant State of the United Netherlands. Still more significant was the recognition of the rights of another Protestant communion besides the Lutheran—the Reformed Church. The gains of Protestantism were, however, in great measure negative; for while Roman Catholicism had emerged a compact and unified entity with a definite body of dogma, the Protestants were divided not only into the two main branches, but these had in turn thrown off numerous warring sects which Lutherans and Calvinists felt it necessary to persecute. And thus in many quarters—

<sup>2</sup> It is true that the Roman Church ceased to be “Catholic” when the severance from the Eastern branch took place; but the two branches did not coexist side by side.

<sup>3</sup> Bryce, *Holy Roman Empire* (new edition, 1910), p. 382.

such as Southern Germany, France, and Poland—Protestantism had lost ground, and the Counter-Reformation had been enabled to achieve a measure of success. But the seventeenth century was confronted with a fact indisputable and irretrievable. There was no longer a Catholic Church except in theory or in vision; rather there were two great Churches—Roman and Reformed—each claiming to be the true Catholic Church, and side by side with them another Church—the Lutheran, and an isolated hybrid body—the Anglican—which were frankly national Churches, and which did not, in the style of Romanism or Calvinism, pretend to universality.

2. The second great change wrought by the Reformation was perhaps more far-reaching and significant than the first. "The supreme achievement of the Reformation," it has been contended by an English historian, "is the modern state."<sup>4</sup> Just as the ideal of the universal ecclesiastical realm—the one spiritual kingdom under the primacy of the Pope—was shattered by the Reformation, so was the conception of a union of tribes and peoples under the overlordship of the Emperor. With Catholicism went internationalism, and the modern State was born. It is true that the Holy Roman Empire had always been less of a reality than the Catholic Church: that it had ever been more or less a pale ghost of Imperial Cæsarism, and that the outlying States of Europe had grown up to full nationhood virtually independent of the Emperors, rendering these potentates simply the overlords of German and Italian princes. Yet the Empire was still regarded, on the eve of the Reformation, as a symbol of European unity; and that the Emperor was looked on as, in some degree at least, a king of kings, is evident from the fact that in 1519 the rulers of England, France, and Spain were each candidates for the Imperial throne. But the Reformation and the events which followed shattered the credit of the universal Empire even more than that of the Catholic

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<sup>4</sup> Figgis, "Political Thought in the Sixteenth Century," *Cambridge Modern History*, Vol. III., p. 736.

#### 4 THE COVENANTERS UNDER PERSECUTION

Church. The nations which had cast off spiritual allegiance to the Pope were no longer likely to maintain the fiction of suzerainty to an Emperor.<sup>5</sup> The growth and development of European nationalities had, it is true, other causes than the Reformation; but the Reformation powerfully accelerated the pace, and with two exceptions the nations of Europe emerged from the great conflict as sovereign States, owning no superior either in the spiritual sphere or in the temporal. It was no accident that the two exceptions were Germany and Italy, where the two pretenders to universal authority had their respective abodes.<sup>6</sup> And even in these lands, although the German and Italian nations remained disunited and in a state of internal chaos, the power and credit of the Empire had passed away. "The peace of Westphalia," as Bryce clearly remarked, "is an era in the history of the Holy Empire not less clearly marked than the coronation of Otto the Great or the death of Frederick the Second. As from the days of Maximilian I. it had borne a mixed or transitional character, well expressed by the name Romano-Germanic, so henceforth it is in everything but title purely and solely a German Empire. Properly, indeed, it was no longer an Empire at all, but a Federation, and that of the loosest sort."<sup>7</sup> Even the rulers of the lesser German States had the power to follow any line of policy, to go to war or form alliances as they chose; and in still greater degree the monarchs of the great Powers—England, France, and Spain—were independent of any external allegiance or restraint. The era of the "European anarchy" had dawned.

But the freedom of the kings of the various nations from the control or supervision of Pope or Emperor had one consequence of far-reaching import. From the

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<sup>5</sup> "Henry VIII. of England, when he rebelled against the Pope, called himself King of Ireland (his predecessors had used only the title 'Dominus Hiberniæ') without asking the Emperor's permission, in order to show that he repudiated the temporal as well as the spiritual dominion of Rome."—Bryce, *Holy Roman Empire*, p. 262.

<sup>6</sup> Lindsay, *History of the Reformation*, Vol. I., pp. 30-32.

<sup>7</sup> *Holy Roman Empire*, pp. 389-390.

nationalism which blossomed into maturity at the Reformation, there was born the Absolutist movement. At first, to the English statesmen of the Tudor period, for instance, the phrase an "absolute king" meant a king not subject to foreign supervision, and "absolute monarchy" freedom from supra-national control, whether political or ecclesiastical.<sup>8</sup> Gradually, however, monarchs arrogated to themselves powers which formerly pertained to Pope and Emperor. Each little German feudal overlord became an absolute monarch. As early as the peace of Augsburg it was laid down that these princes were to be supreme over the consciences of their subjects, as well as free to determine their own convictions. The principle, *cujus regio ejus religio*, was enunciated, which laid down that the religion of the subject was made dependent on the will of the monarch; and the peace of Westphalia did not decrease, but rather increased, the power of princes.<sup>9</sup>

In still greater degree the seventeenth century witnessed the growth of Absolutism in the other States of Europe. England had become, during the reign of Elizabeth, more and more of an absolute monarchy; and Absolutism was pushed to its logical conclusion by her successor, James I. He ruled by divine right, as God's vicegerent, responsible to no man, above all law. "As it is atheism and blasphemy to dispute what God can do, so it is presumption and a high contempt in a subject to dispute what a king can do, or to say that a king cannot do this and that."<sup>10</sup> The political history of Great Britain during the seventeenth century was simply the record of the varying fortunes of the doctrine of State Absolutism—known as the divine right of kings; and in France, then near the zenith of glory as a great continental power, Absolutism carried the day. Louis XIV., called by Lord Acton "by far the ablest man who was born in modern times on the steps of a throne,"<sup>11</sup> was the most thoroughgoing of all the

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<sup>8</sup> J. R. Green, *History of the English People* (revised edition), p. 478.

<sup>9</sup> Bryce, *Holy Roman Empire*, p. 386.

<sup>10</sup> Green, *History of the English People*, p. 478.

<sup>11</sup> Quoted by A. J. Grant, *Cambridge Modern History*, Vol. V., p. 2.

exponents of divine right. His classical phrase, "*L'état, c'est moi*," crystallised an attitude, and this attitude impelled the whole policy of his reign. The authority of the Crown was supreme, triumphing over all rivals: local assemblies, synods, and councils, civil and ecclesiastical alike, existed only by the gracious permission of the king,<sup>12</sup> and France was only the extreme case. The seventeenth century witnessed the triumph of Absolutism all over Europe, except in England and Scotland, the Netherlands, and the Swiss Confederation.<sup>13</sup>

The monarchs of the seventeenth century treated the Church exactly as they treated parliaments and municipalities. The monarch regarded himself as head of the Church, the vicegerent of God, the fountain of all power. And the Churches were not united in their attitude to these pretensions. Within the fold of Romanism as well as between the Protestant communions there was sharp division. While the Ultramontanists among the French clergy stood for the traditional Catholic policy, a strong body of churchmen rallied to Louis XIV.—a fact which emphasises how the Reformation and the growth of Absolutism had broken the old Catholic spirit. To the Gallican party it seemed a prime necessity that "Catholicism should be kept under the strict surveillance of the civil powers; its profession was not so much a duty to God as a duty to the State."<sup>14</sup> Gallicanism was simply Erastianism called by another name.

If the Roman Catholic Church—truncated and shorn of its power over the minds and consciences of men—was, on the question of State Absolutism, a house divided against itself, the two great branches of Protestantism stood in antagonism one to the other. Indeed, in so far as this question was concerned, it is true to say with a

<sup>12</sup> A. J. Grant, *Cambridge Modern History*, Vol. V., pp. 2-5.

<sup>13</sup> Morley, *Oliver Cromwell*, p. 23.

<sup>14</sup> Viscount St Cyres, *Cambridge Modern History*, Vol. V., p. 72. "To transfer the allegiance of the human spirit from clerical to civil authority was, roughly speaking, the effect of the movement of the sixteenth century alike in Catholic and Protestant countries."—Figgis, "Political Thought in the Sixteenth Century," *Cambridge Modern History*, Vol. III., p. 738.

prominent theologian that "not only one but two 'Protestantisms' have to be taken into account."<sup>15</sup> The attitude of the Lutheran Churches, supported in this matter by the Anglican Church—which was, however, mildly Calvinistic in creed—was sharply opposed by the position taken up by the Reformed or Calvinistic Churches. In some measure this was due to the origin of the two kinds of Protestantism. Luther had been dependent to a great extent on the territorial princes, many of whom were anxious for personal and selfish motives to be free of the spiritual overlordship of a foreign bishop, which was galling to their national pride, and even more to their individual liberties. Accordingly, the princes carried through the ecclesiastical revolution, and in each German State, and later in the Scandinavian countries, the monarch became the supreme head of the Church. It was otherwise with the Reformed Church, which was from the beginning in rebellion not only against the Roman hierarchy but against the State. Zwingli, its actual founder, was a citizen not of a monarchy but of a small republic. Calvin, its greatest figure, was a convert to a Church in full opposition to the State—the Huguenot Church in France. In Scotland, the Reformed Church was established only by a revolution which overthrew the Government. In England the Calvinists were permanently in opposition.

But there were other factors besides the accidental circumstance of origin which explain the different attitudes to Absolutism which were adopted by Lutheranism and Calvinism respectively. First of all there was a religious factor: (i.) Calvinism and Lutheranism were at one in their insistence on the direct fellowship of man with God, and in their opposition to the Roman conception of the priesthood as a mediatorial class, exercising unlimited power by virtue of their ordination, and coming between man and his Maker. Calvinists and Lutherans alike dissented from the Catholic schemes of grace and salvation,

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<sup>15</sup> Troeltsch, *Protestantism and Progress*, p. 53.

and the Catholic view of the relation of the clergy to the believer. And in the earlier years of the Reformation, Lutherans as well as Calvinists stood for the "freedom of the Christian man"—liberty of conscience, with all its implicates in social and political life. But from the beginning the Lutheran witness lacked robustness. As the late Dr Kuyper, the Dutch theologian and politician, remarked, "Luther as well as Calvin contended for a direct fellowship with God, but Luther took it up from its subjective anthropological side, and not from its objective cosmological side as Calvin did. Luther's starting point was the special soteriological principle of a justifying faith; while Calvin's, extending far wider, lay in the general cosmological principle of the sovereignty of God."<sup>16</sup> It has been pointed out that in this matter Zwingli stood nearer to Luther than to Calvin in his insistence on the goodness of God, but to him, and in still greater degree to Calvin, the majesty of God as Sovereign was of more significance than the saving grace of God in Christ; hence the supreme place occupied in the Calvinistic theology by the doctrine of predestination, with its emphasis on divine election. The consequence of this emphasis has been indicated by a modern German theologian, the late Dr Ernst Troeltsch, of Heidelberg: "The consciously elect man feels himself to be the destined lord of the world, who, in the power of God and for the honour of God, has it laid upon him to grasp and shape the world. The man who is simply saved by grace, also, of course, receives his salvation direct from God, but in his dread of acting on the assumptions of predestinarianism, avoids any strict delimitation and relation of the spheres of God and the world, and takes refuge rather in a purely religious sphere out of the world."<sup>17</sup> Hence Calvinism has ever taken the whole world as its province, and

<sup>16</sup> Kuyper, *Calvinism*, p. 20.

<sup>17</sup> *Protestantism and Progress*, p. 63. It should be pointed out that the highly emotional popular Evangelicalism of the present day with its subjective individualism has more in common with Lutheran than with Calvinistic tradition.

emphasised in a manner alien to Lutheranism the social and civil rights as well as duties of the Christian man.

(ii.) A second factor, arising largely out of the first, was the fact that Calvinism possessed what Lutheranism lacked—a clear-cut theory of the Church with which to oppose not only the position of Rome, but also the new political Absolutism which had arisen from the ruins of the Holy Roman Empire and the Catholic Church. Lutherans and Anglicans alike failed to realise that along with much error the Catholic concept of the visible Church embodied elements of permanent truth; and thus they simply exchanged one form of tyranny—foreign and spiritual—for another—national and civil. Calvin, however, never lost sight of the Catholicity and independence of the Church. He claimed, indeed, that the Reformed Church was the true Church, and vehemently rebutted the Roman contention that the Reformers had unchurched themselves.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, he threw the charge of schism back at his Romanist opponents, holding that the Papal Church had ceased to be the true Church, while not denying that many members of the true Church were within its fold. And the idea of the Church Catholic was never quite absent from his mind, for his ideal was not only a union of Protestant Churches, but a reunion with a purified Roman Church.<sup>19</sup>

The ideal of a Catholic Church—which had faded from the minds of Lutherans and Anglicans, whose outlook was frankly nationalist—was thus opposed by Calvinists to the political Absolutism of the time; and here the Calvinists and the traditional Catholics were at one. “The Catholics could not admit the control of the monarch in the sphere of religion any more than the Calvinist; and here, as in other things, the Catholic priest and the Calvinistic presbyter were agreed. Filmer, an exponent

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<sup>18</sup> Letter to du Tillet, 30th October 1538 (quoted by Mitchell Hunter, *Teaching of Calvin*, p. 147). The late Prof. Hume Brown truly remarked that “of all the developments of Christianity, Calvinism and the Church of Rome alone bear the stamp of an absolute religion.” (*John Knox*, Vol. I., p. 252.)

<sup>19</sup> Mitchell Hunter, *Teaching of Calvin*, p. 159.

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of Anglican monarchism, expresses this well when he says, in speaking of the doctrine of a social contract, that 'Cardinal Bellarmine and Calvin both look askint this way': for the doctrine of a social contract was the democratic doctrine put forward by Catholics and Calvinists in opposition to the Lutheran and Anglican doctrine of divine right."<sup>20</sup> Thus the Reformed Church was at one and the same time the rival and antagonist of Rome, and the rallying point of opposition to political Absolutism and the divine right of kings.<sup>21</sup>

In one vital respect the Calvinistic doctrine of the Church differed from that of Rome. The seat of authority in religion was transferred from the Church to the Bible.<sup>22</sup> In this all Protestants were agreed. In the sixteenth century—during the lifetime of the first reformers—there was considerable freedom in handling the Scriptures. The comments, for instance, which Luther made on the various books of the sacred volume have an almost modern ring about them. To him the Gospel—God's forgiving and redeeming love as manifest in Jesus Christ—was central, and all else was subsidiary to it. From His Gospel the Scriptures derived their authority; apart from it they had no intrinsic value.<sup>23</sup> Thus the Gospel became the standard by which it was possible to judge the various books of the Bible, and in memorable phrases Luther voiced his preferences for certain books over others.<sup>24</sup> But Zwingli's attitude to Scripture was different. Christ was not to him central in the same sense as to Luther. Indeed, he declared that the "knowledge of

<sup>20</sup> Mr Ernest Barker in Wells' *Outline of History*, p. 506.

<sup>21</sup> This was not always clearly realised, and the two factors were not always clearly disentangled. Shields, however, in the *Hind Let Loose* (p. 1), distinguished between the strenuous endeavours of the Papacy to regain the lost power and the fact that "the crowned heads or horns of the beast, the tyrants, alias kings of Europe . . . are advancing their prerogatives upon the ruins of national and ecclesiastical privileges to a pitch of absoluteness."

<sup>22</sup> It is true that Catholic beliefs were ultimately based on Scripture, but Scripture was received on the authority of the Church.

<sup>23</sup> M'Giffert, *Protestant Thought Before Kant*, p. 56.

<sup>24</sup> See Beard, *The Reformation in Relation to Modern Thought and Knowledge*, pp. 157-159, for examples of these.

God in His own nature precedes the knowledge of Christ";<sup>25</sup> and the Bible was to him essentially the revelation of the Divine Will and an authoritative law code rather than a means of grace.<sup>26</sup> Calvin viewed Scripture from essentially the same angle; the Bible was to him the Word of God from cover to cover. He was himself a scholar and exegete of no mean order and a pioneer of scientific exegesis; indeed, in his masterly study of Calvin's teaching, Dr Mitchell Hunter claims that he paved the way to "such a scientific examination of Scripture as has laid the axe to the root of much of his own dogmatising, and has deprived the Bible of that attribute of uniform and unquestionable authority on which he based his whole system."<sup>27</sup> And Calvin, though in less degree than Luther, exhibited a remarkable freedom in his handling of Scripture and in his emphasis on its component parts.<sup>28</sup> After Calvin's death, however, a marked retrogression set in; and with the dawn of the era of Protestant scholasticism a most uncompromising view of Biblical inspiration became prevalent, both in Lutheran and Calvinist Churches. The authorship and date of the various books of the Bible were regarded in themselves as trifles. Prophets, psalmists, evangelists, and apostles were viewed simply as so many amanuenses writing to the dictation of the Holy Spirit. Not only were the general truths of the Bible viewed as God-given; it was maintained that every word and letter—even the vowel points of the Hebrew text—were directly inspired from above. Consequently, the Bible came to be regarded as little more than a volume of proof texts for the doctrines of Protestant theology. Obviously the authors of the Westminster Confession—a document which belongs to the scholastic period—believed

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<sup>25</sup> Zwingli's Works, III., p. 180: quoted by M'Giffert, *Protestant Thought Before Kant*, p. 67.

<sup>26</sup> M'Giffert, *ib.*, p. 70.

<sup>27</sup> *Teaching of Calvin*, p. 29.

<sup>28</sup> "When Calvin came to use the Bible practically, he ceased to regard it as a medium through which the Divine Spirit speaks to the human spirit, and fettered himself and others by a conception which was legal, not evangelical."—Reyburn, *John Calvin: His Life, Letters, and Work*, p. 353.

that a doctrine could be formulated and proved by texts extracted from any portion of either Testament. It has been aptly said that "the same kind of an *ex opere operato* theory was attached to the Bible as the Catholics attached to the Sacraments."<sup>29</sup> Thus the Bible came to be regarded as absolutely inerrant on "all points on which it was its design to teach—historical, geographical, chronological, as well as doctrinal or ethical."<sup>30</sup>

The upshot of this was an attitude of hostility towards what was called heresy—which in effect meant towards all views which happened to conflict with the dogmatic system based on this view of Scripture. It is true that all the heretics of the seventeenth century—Socinians no less than Arminians, and Quakers no less than Anabaptists—made the Bible their final court of appeal; nevertheless they were condemned as sternly by orthodox Protestantism as by the Church of Rome, for Protestantism had taken over *in toto* most of the dogmas of Catholic theology. The Synod of Dort was as ruthless as any Catholic council. Likewise Protestantism vied with Romanism in its opposition to the new knowledge, the genesis of which had been itself a kind of by-product of the period of turmoil. It is true that science took its rise in the spirit of free inquiry released by the Renaissance, but its growth was doubtless accelerated by the emphasis in the earlier period of the Reformation of the rights of private judgment. Nevertheless, the revolutionary theory of the Earth's place in Nature, put forward by Copernicus and advocated by Galileo, was as stoutly contested and unsparingly denounced by Lutherans and Calvinists as by Romanists.<sup>31</sup> Nor was hostility less pronounced towards the new philosophical movement associated with the names of Descartes and Spinoza.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>29</sup> M'Giffert, *Protestant Thought Before Kant*, p. 146.

<sup>30</sup> W. P. Paterson, *The Rule of Faith*, p. 64, where the subject is concisely discussed.

<sup>31</sup> Examples of Protestant hostility are given by Dr Andrew D. White, *The Warfare of Science with Theology*, Vol. I., pp. 126-130.

<sup>32</sup> *The Warfare of Science with Theology*, Vol. I., pp. 16, 133; Vol. II., p. 318.

If Romanism and Protestantism were at one in regard to the opinions which they repudiated, they were equally so in regard to the superstitions of the age. Behind the clear theological conceptions of the day was an indefinite background of weird superstition—belief in devils and demoniac powers, and in the activity of the evil spirits through their agents, the witches. It has been pointed out that the devil played a large part in the life and thought of Luther. "His faith in satanic temptation and possession was not only very real and deep, but of a childish simplicity and credulity. . . . His belief in the perpetual and all-pervading energy of Satan was a precise counterpart to his faith in the omnipresent activity of God,"<sup>33</sup> and this belief was shared in greater or less degree by Protestants and Romanists. The belief in diabolical presence has been called "the intellectual basis of witchcraft,"<sup>34</sup> and seems to have been held all but universally, side by side with exalted conceptions of the Divine presence and saving activity. At the same time the large number of those who were suspected of being specially connected with the devil, and their own confessions of belief in his friendship to them, lends colour to the view which sees behind the prevailing belief in witchcraft the survival of a primitive and debased form of Paganism which had degenerated into devil-worship, with the associated immoral rites.<sup>35</sup>

Such is in general outline the world view of the seventeenth century—the political, ecclesiastical, religious, and intellectual environment of the Scottish Covenanters, and the background against which they waged their fifty years' struggle and endured their twenty-eight years of persecution.

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<sup>33</sup> Beard, *The Reformation in its Relation to Modern Thought and Knowledge*, p. 165.

<sup>34</sup> Lecky, *History of Rationalism in Europe*, Vol. I., p. 39.

<sup>35</sup> This theory is elaborately presented by Miss Margaret Alice Murray, *The Witch Cult in Western Europe*.

## CHAPTER II

### THE COVENANTING MOVEMENT IN ITS POLITICO-ECCLESIASTICAL ASPECT

IN memorable phrase the saintly Leighton, in a letter to Lauderdale, referred to the "unworthy and trifling contentions" of the later Covenantee period in Scotland as little better than "a drunken scuffle in the dark,"<sup>1</sup> and remarkably enough this verdict has come to be endorsed in greater or less degree by various writers and historians of different shades of opinion. With a remarkable incapacity to grasp the issues at stake, the late Mr Andrew Lang essayed to tell the story of the times "very briefly." The Covenantee party were fanatics and rebels, resisting the lawful government in a blind insistence on "parity of ministers," or conversely on the abolition of the office of bishop. "The various and veering governments could not grant these demands. . . . All that government wanted was to keep the Presbyterians in as good order as Cromwell had done."<sup>2</sup> In another place he described the struggle as the clash of two divine rights—"that of sacred hereditary monarchy, and that of the apostolic privileges of preachers."<sup>3</sup> Following him came Colonel John Buchan, who brackets together as of the same category "the ways of the Stewarts and the ways of the preachers,"<sup>4</sup> maintaining that "the bulk of the ministers were preaching flat treason and anarchy,"<sup>5</sup> while illogically admitting that the Covenanters in the

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<sup>1</sup> *Lauderdale Papers* (ed. by Airy), III., p. 76.

<sup>2</sup> *History of Scotland*, Vol. III., p. 311.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*, p. 422.

<sup>4</sup> Essay on "Making of Modern Scotland" in *Some Eighteenth Century Byways*, p. 138.

<sup>5</sup> *Ib.*, p. 136.

era of persecution had a good cause.<sup>6</sup> The breaking of "the despotism of the Kirk" is to Colonel John Buchan a matter of greater import than "the overthrow of a corrupt and incompetent Government."<sup>7</sup> Dr Law Mathieson is more generous to the Covenanters, but on the whole his standpoint is the same.<sup>8</sup> Even the late Dr Hume Brown, whose sympathies lay wholly with the Covenanters, was inclined to accept the view that during the Covenanting struggle two divine rights struggled for supremacy, and that the result was compromise.<sup>9</sup>

It is impossible, however, to maintain such a view when the various factors are taken into consideration and viewed in proper proportion. It is true, as Dr Butler has so ably contended, that the second of the two Covenants—the Solemn League and Covenant of 1643—was essentially an intolerant document which committed the Covenanters to persecuting principles—"an open attempt to deny liberty of conscience to others."<sup>10</sup> And it is true that as the struggle went on, the extremer elements clung with tenacity to the Covenants—that in short the Covenants became almost fetishes. But in themselves these documents were only means to an end, and were called into existence by the needs of the times. The struggle began long before the Calvinists in Scotland were called Covenanters, and we cannot appreciate what was at stake until we grasp the fact that the issues were not exclusively Scottish, nor were the vital points in dispute government by bishops, or the use of liturgies, or even the extirpation of Popery and Prelacy.

It is impossible to pass a final verdict on the issues of

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<sup>6</sup> Essay on "Making of Modern Scotland," in *Some Eighteenth Century Byways*, p. 131.

<sup>7</sup> *Ib.*, p. 140.

<sup>8</sup> *Politics and Religion in Scotland, 1560-1695*.

<sup>9</sup> Note his remark concerning the ministers who accepted the Indulgence: "The compliance of these ministers was in truth the first and necessary step towards that religious and political compromise which the force of circumstances was impressing on the Scottish people."—*History*, II., p. 414.

<sup>10</sup> *Life and Letters of Robert Leighton*, pp. 186-187.

the Covenanting movement without considering the situation in Great Britain as a whole against the general background of the seventeenth century, and its various currents of thought in matters political and ecclesiastical, as well as theology and religion. The history of Great Britain during the seventeenth century is in great measure the record of the conflict between Absolutism on the one hand and the Calvinistic attitude to the State on the other. There was, of course, another factor of far-reaching influence. Romanism was never far out of sight, and, curiously enough, the Stewart kings, who were thoroughgoing absolutists and, theoretically, opponents of the political pretensions of the Papacy, were in the religious sphere more or less in harmony with Catholic beliefs.<sup>11</sup>

It has been contended, indeed, that "it was against the Pope, not against the people, that the animus of the absolutist attack was directed."<sup>12</sup> This was true in England, but only in the earlier stages of the Absolutist movement. The Elizabethan statesmen were bent on the removal of supra-national checks, but in the later part of the struggle it was against the Calvinists—who were in a general sense the champions of popular rights—that the attack was directed. The Stewarts were, indeed, all more or less sympathetic to Romanism as a religious system, and would gladly have reigned as Louis XIV. did—actual heads of a national branch of the Catholic Church.

A conditioning factor of the greatest importance, with far-reaching effect on the course of events in Great Britain in the seventeenth century, was the different form which the Reformation took in England and in Scotland. In England the change was effected by the Crown, and was part and parcel of the Absolutist movement as a whole; the sovereign became supreme head of the Church and the fountain of all ecclesiastical power. Henry VIII. would have had the movement stop there. His ideal was a Church Romanist in its essentials, in worship and in doctrine,

<sup>11</sup> James II. and VII. had two mutually incompatible objects.

<sup>12</sup> Figgis, "Political Thought in the Sixteenth Century," *Cambridge Modern History*, III., p. 750.

minus Papal control. The time-spirit was too strong for Henry, and a moderate Calvinism became the creed of the Anglican Church; but in the ecclesiastical sphere the Tudors had their way, and the Church of England has since been the most national and Erastian of all branches of organised Christianity. In Scotland the movement was of a radically different type. Firstly, the Scottish Reformation was delayed for a quarter of a century after the formal severance of the Church of England from Rome; and by this time Calvinism had become the dominant politico-ecclesiastical force on the Continent. Secondly, the movement was inspired and directed chiefly by John Knox, the friend and disciple of Calvin, who saw in Geneva "the most perfect school of Christ that ever was on the earth since the days of the Apostles,"<sup>13</sup> and who modelled the Reformed Church of Scotland, so far as lay in his power, on that of Geneva. Thirdly, and more important still, the triumph of Knox and the Protestant party was brought about at the price of a revolution,<sup>14</sup> and from the start the new Church had no innate respect for the heads of the State as such. The revolution, thoroughgoing as it was, did not commit the government to the hands of disinterested adherents of the Reformation, for there was still a Catholic queen, trained in the school of the Guises. And so, from the beginning, the Church in Scotland was a revolutionary organisation, too strong to be crushed, but only just tolerated by the Crown.

At first the Kirk was on its guard chiefly against Romanism; but the dethronement of Queen Mary in 1567, and the defeat of the Armada twenty-one years later, caused the peril of the Counter-Reformation to fade into the background of a greater peril. James VI., though trained a Protestant and educated under the wholesome influence of George Buchanan, became at an early stage of his career devoted to the political creed of State

<sup>13</sup> Hume Brown, *John Knox*, I., p. 187.

<sup>14</sup> MacEwen, *History of the Church in Scotland*, II., p. 145: "A revolution undoubtedly it was, politically as well as religiously."

Absolutism in the form of the divine right of kings. Doubtless he was encouraged by what he saw across the Border. There the sovereign was indisputably the head of the Church and the source of all ecclesiastical authority ; and in the latter years of Elizabeth's reign, the old queen was an absolute monarch and the country was " frankly governed by her unfettered will." <sup>15</sup> And so James, who looked forward to his succession to the English throne, sought to bring Scotland into line. The power of the great feudal barons was still great, and even their sporadic resistance hampered him. But the chief obstacle was the Kirk, under the leadership of Melville, who boldly declared that the Church was not, and could not, be a department of State, and who laid down the principle that " there are two kings and two kingdoms in Scotland." <sup>16</sup> Taking as his guiding principle the idea enshrined in his phrase, " No bishop, no king," James set to work to break the power of the Kirk. His accession to the English throne in 1603 gave him his opportunity. He had now the might of England at his back, and by the time of his death in 1625 he had in a great degree succeeded. A modified episcopacy was introduced, and the Church was subordinated to the State. Charles I., however, lacked his father's ability as a statesman, and, alike in England and Scotland, he pressed the absolutist creed too far, with results which were fatal to himself. The long smouldering discontent in Scotland burst into flame, and having alienated the nobility at the same time as the clergy, he was face to face with a revolution such as had confronted his great-grandmother, Mary of Guise. The charter of this Scottish revolution was the National Covenant signed in 1638. This document, which gave its name to a party and a movement, was simply a means to an end. It was not in the main a new document.

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<sup>15</sup> Sir Sidney Lee, " The Last Years of Elizabeth," *Cambridge Modern History*, III., p. 362.

<sup>16</sup> During the famous interview in Falkland Palace: Calderwood's *History*, V., p. 440. James Melville, *Diary*, p. 325 (Wodrow Society Publications).

The practice of signing bonds or covenants was not new in Scotland; several had been signed since the Reformation. One of these, the Covenant of 1580, with additions drafted by Alexander Henderson and Johnston of Warriston, was produced and again solemnly sworn.<sup>17</sup> In the face of complete national unity, the king was forced to capitulate.

But the situation in England was the decisive factor. The English Puritan party were engaged in the same kind of struggle as the Covenanters of Scotland, and the latter party, by their assistance to the former under the terms of the Solemn League and Covenant, in effect declared war again on the king, and the unforeseen end of the Civil War was the establishment of what, under various names, amounted to a military dictatorship—both in England and Scotland. In spirit, it is true, English Puritanism was akin to the Scottish Calvinism which during the Commonwealth it dominated; but the sense of alien domination drove the bulk of the Covenanters on to the side of the kings. It was the unnatural coalition of Royalism and moderate Calvinism against the extremist elements typified in Cromwell and the “sectaries” which made the Restoration possible. The Protesters, it is true, pointed out the dangers lurking in the return to the Stewart dynasty; but their warnings passed largely unheeded, and when the Restoration took place, political Absolutism was placed in a position of commanding authority with the tacit approval of the great mass of the people. As Charles James Fox truly remarked of Great Britain as a whole: “The short interval between Cromwell’s death and the Restoration exhibits the picture of a nation either so wearied with changes as not to feel, or so subdued by military power as not to dare to show any care or preference with regard to the form of their Government.”<sup>18</sup>

The Royalists were thus in a position of commanding influence and almost unlimited power. At the beginning

<sup>17</sup> Hay Fleming, *The Story of the Scottish Covenant*, p. 31.

<sup>18</sup> *History of the Early Part of the Reign of James II.*, pp. 19-20.

of the reign of Charles II. there was no question of establishing absolute monarchy in England.<sup>19</sup> It was the ultimate aim and was achieved, in part at least, towards the close of the king's life, when the bad tactics of the Whig party over the Exclusion Bill played into the hands of the Royalists. The victory had been practically won for Absolutism, as in the chief nations of the Continent, when James II. mounted the English throne. His absolutism was as robust as that of his brother, and less dissimulated; but he attempted to achieve two aims which were mutually destructive. Louis XIV. was a Catholic and an Absolutist, and he could afford to be both, because of the fact that the faith of the French people was, as a whole, Catholic, and because Protestantism in France was Calvinistic and anti-absolutist. Charles II. was Catholic at heart, but realised that for reasons of State he must carry the Anglican Church and the bulk of the people with him to make himself absolute. James II. failed to realise this. He forgot that even to the irreligious and politically servile Englishmen, as well as to the Anglican clergy and to the Nonconformists, Popery was an anti-nationalist despotism—obnoxious on both religious and political grounds. He pursued these two aims—to make himself absolute and Great Britain Catholic, with what has been called “that stupid obstinacy which is so frequently fatal to a man without talent,”<sup>20</sup> and the Revolution was due first and foremost to the folly of the last Stewart king.<sup>21</sup>

If Charles II. and his advisers walked warily in England, their Scottish policy was of a different kind; from the beginning it was open and thorough. The circumstances were peculiarly favourable for the establish-

<sup>19</sup> Ramsay Muir, *History of British Commonwealth*, I., p. 500.

<sup>20</sup> Lord John Russell, in his *Essays on Government*, quoted in Wodrow's *History*, Appendix IV., p. 498.

<sup>21</sup> As Goldwin Smith clearly said: “The twin objects of James' policy, absolute monarchy and the conversion of England from Protestantism to Popery, were thoroughly akin, as the history of Europe has shown; yet, happily for the nation, one crossed and wrecked the other.”—*The United Kingdom*, Vol. II., p. 56.

ment in Scotland of thoroughgoing Absolutism. The feeling of apathy was as widespread in Scotland as in England. For over twenty years life had been lived at the highest pressure. Wars and rebellions, revolutions and counter-revolutions, intrigues and plots, had disturbed the life of the country for many years. Not only the wars with England against Charles I. and later against Cromwell, but the civil strife of the rival factions and the campaigns of Montrose, waged as they had been with atrocious cruelty, had left the country utterly exhausted. With the return of Charles II. to the throne of his ancestors, it was felt that, whatever his views and his record, the situation had been stabilised, and that a reversion to normal conditions might be expected. In common with England, too, Scotland was undoubtedly experiencing in 1660 the ebb of the religious tide. The reaction against Puritanism was in full swing, and was reflected in the life and deportment of Edinburgh as unmistakably as in that of London. During the rule of the Commonwealth, despite the fact that the Assembly was not permitted to meet, and despite the division of the Church into the two hostile groups of Resolutioners and Protesters, the power of the Kirk in the social life of the community had reached its zenith. The Government was a foreign despotism, but its spirit was all on the side of moral discipline, and its attitude to the Kirk was one of benevolence,<sup>22</sup> and so in local and social matters the kirk sessions and presbyteries were allowed a free hand, and the consequence was that strong efforts were made, in the Lowlands at least, not only for religion, but for morality. "In the interval between the two kings," according to Kirkton, "religion advanced the greatest steps it had made for many years: the ministry was notably purified and the people strangely refined."<sup>23</sup> "This seems to me to have been Scotland's high noon. The only complaint of profane people was that the government was so strict they had not liberty

<sup>22</sup> See Beattie, *History of Church of Scotland During the Commonwealth*, p. 93.

<sup>23</sup> Kirkton, *History*, p. 48.

## 22 THE COVENANTERS UNDER PERSECUTION

enough to sin.”<sup>24</sup> “Nobody complained more of our Church government than our taverners, whose ordinary lamentation was, their trade was broke, people were become so sober.”<sup>25</sup> Making allowances for the fact that Kirkton wrote at a later date, when the period of the Commonwealth seemed almost idyllic by comparison with the persecution, there can be little doubt of the accuracy of Hetherington’s verdict that “the account which he gives of the state of religion at that time in Scotland, though highly coloured, is nevertheless in all its main lineaments a faithful representation of the truth.”<sup>26</sup> This was undoubtedly due in great measure to the austere morality of the more active and earnest among the Covenanting ministers. Blackadder records that at the time of his settlement in the parish of Troqueer in 1653, “scandals did abound, especially idle swearing, excessive tipping in alehouses, foolish jesting, obscene expressions, and promiscuous dancing, especially at marriages.”<sup>27</sup> To rectify this state of affairs he ordered all to provide themselves with Bibles, and commenced a strict personal supervision of the habits of the people. Each half-year he catechised the entire parish, and his catechising was not of a perfunctory sort. Nor did he omit to drive home in his public preaching the elementary moral duties of religion. Discipline was freely invoked, and even excommunication was resorted to.<sup>28</sup> Zeal bore fruit not only in this particular parish,<sup>29</sup> but in every place where such an intensive religious work was carried on; but it undoubtedly irritated and angered many who, in their inmost hearts, remained obdurate. Many of the nobles and gentry belonged to this class, and resented the faithfulness with which their private vices

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<sup>24</sup> Kirkton, *History*, pp. 49-50.

<sup>25</sup> *Ib.*, p. 65. Law, in his *Memorials* (p. 7), corroborates the estimate of Kirkton that the period was one of religious and moral progress.

<sup>26</sup> *History of the Church of Scotland*, p. 364.

<sup>27</sup> Blackadder, *Memoirs* (ed. by Crichton), 1st edition, p. 38.

<sup>28</sup> *Ib.*, p. 44.

<sup>29</sup> *Ib.*, p. 41.

were handled,<sup>30</sup> and accordingly their influence was cast, when the Restoration came, on the side of a Government dominated by men of the world, without principle and of lax morality. Not only the frivolous upper class, but many among the lower ranks of the people rejoiced in the collapse of the Commonwealth Government which had given the Kirk so free a hand. For these, "the Restoration, with its promise of happier days for the natural man, appears to have been an unmingled joy."<sup>31</sup> The new Government, alike in Scotland as in England, had the unswerving support of the great proportion of the population who were frivolous and licentious, and were weary of restraint.

But there were particular circumstances peculiar to Scotland which still further assisted the Restoration Government in any policy which it chose to pursue. (i.) The first was the loyalty of the Scots to monarchical rule. Republicanism was the creed of but one or two doctrinaires, and the treatment of Scotland by the English Republican party had not been considerate or magnanimous. Scotland had been forced into an incorporating union distasteful and humiliating to the vast mass of the people. The Estates of Parliament had been abolished, and Scotland had been compelled to accept representation in a United Parliament which was quite disproportionate to the population of the country. The courts of justice had ceased to function, and the General Assembly, the emblem of the independence of Scottish ecclesiastical life, had been dissolved by Cromwell in 1653. To the average Scotsman, Republicanism spelt an alien domination, not perhaps oppressive, but galling to the national spirit. The cause of national independence appeared to be bound up with monarchical rule, and the Restoration seemingly implied the recovery of the independence of Scotland. That it was nominal independence only, and that the country was for thirty

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<sup>30</sup> Blackadder, *Memoirs*, 1st edition, p. 45.

<sup>31</sup> Hume Brown, *History*, II., p. 381.

years to be little better than a northern province of England, did not become apparent until after Charles II. was firmly seated on his father's throne. The uproarious loyalty which found expression in the convivial rejoicings all over the country was, on the whole, genuine ; and if the Protesters—and probably many of the Resolutioners as well—felt some misgivings at the almost unlimited powers given to a king of whose sincerity they were suspicious, they had still no alternative in their minds to a Stewart restoration.

(ii.) A second factor which told heavily in favour of the Government was the weakness of the Scottish Parliament. Throughout the greater part of its history the authority of this Parliament had been in great measure stultified by the existence of the committee of the Lords of the Articles ; for this committee, except during the period of the Covenanting ascendancy (1638-49), and again after the Revolution, was the ultimate repository of parliamentary power. The Crown and the Privy Council dominated the committee and the Estates alike ; and the great nobles who formed so large a proportion of the membership had been driven by force of circumstances almost wholly on to the side of the Crown.<sup>32</sup> Nor was Parliament jealous of its constitutional rights. There was no tradition in Scotland such as existed in the southern kingdom. Charles was forced to defer to the English Parliament, and to consider the attitude of the House of Commons. He was under no such obligation in Scotland to cover his designs of absolute monarchy.

(iii.) The Kirk had been in the past two reigns the rallying point of the national resistance. Through the Assembly, rather than through Parliament, had the popular voice found expression. But the Kirk was in 1660 wellnigh impotent. The Assembly had not met for seven years ; and while the power of the Church in a social sense had been growing, it had been waning

<sup>32</sup> Wodrow, *History*, I., p. 89. "Such fools," said Row, "were our temporising, rotten-hearted nobles, flattering and fawning upon them that were to tread upon their necks."—*Blair*, p. 406.

politically. In addition, the Church could speak with no united voice. To all intents and purposes it had been split into two rival bodies, and the policy of the two parties—Resolutioners and Protesters—had been antagonistic. There was ecclesiastical activity, no doubt. Every effort was made by Douglas and other leaders to get the ear of the king. But Charles knew well that there was no actual power behind the resolutions and supplications of presbyteries: and he was right. It is often said that the treachery of one man—James Sharp—was the cause of the restoration of Episcopacy. If so, the fact is the measure of the impotence of the Kirk. ✓

Thus the times were peculiarly favourable in Scotland for the advancement of Royalist pretensions of the most exaggerated form, and from the beginning of the reign it was obvious that Charles and his Scottish ministers were bent on realising in Scotland the ideal of a servile state; and it must be borne in mind that this was the unswerving aim of the Scottish administration for twenty-eight years. The persecution of the later Covenanters was essentially a political persecution. It is a profound mistake to contend that the struggle was a religious one, or even an ecclesiastical one in its essence. The Government did not wage it out of a disinterested zeal for the Episcopalian form of Church government, or from a belief that the spiritual interests of the people would be best served if the Church were governed by bishops.<sup>33</sup> Charles II. and his Scottish advisers, who had in their day been Covenanters from political motives, cared little or nothing for Church government. But the Episcopal form was useful to them, because it is essentially bureaucratic, because the royal headship was easily grafted on to it, and because the bishops—a few men appointed by the Crown and dependent on the royal favour—were much more easily managed than annual assemblies, in which ✓

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<sup>33</sup> Note Dr Matthew M'Kail's remark of Lauderdale: "He values the Episcopal clergy as little as the Presbyterians when it comes in competition with the king's supremacy," quoted by Dr J. King Hewison, *The Covenanters*, II., p. 277.

every clergyman and elder had an equal vote.<sup>34</sup> This was perceived clearly by the Covenanting controversialists of the time. The writer of *Naphtali*, for instance, characterised the "later prelacy" as "worse and more intolerable than the Roman hierarchy." The Roman Church, with all its faults, was under another and distinct head, and thus sometimes the Roman prelates were led to oppose unlimited royal power; whereas "our prelates, deriving all their power and being from the king's supremacy . . . have by sad experience ever inclined the government unto tyranny."<sup>35</sup>

That the establishment of absolute government, not only over the Church but over the State as well, was the settled policy of all the governments—the more moderate as well as the more severe—from the Restoration to the Revolution, is obvious from a perusal of the various Acts of Parliament and Council, of proclamations, and oaths and bonds. Thus in 1661, besides the Act Recissory, there was passed an Act declaring it "high treason" for subjects, of whatever number, "upon any pretext whatsoever, to rise, continue in arms, or to enter into leagues and bonds with foreigners or among themselves, without his majesty's special warrant and approbation had and obtained thereto."<sup>36</sup> Thus the right of association was abolished at one blow. Still more repressive measures followed. In September the Privy Council prohibited the electing of any person to be magistrate or councillor in any royal burgh who was not of "known loyalty and affection to his majesty's government."<sup>37</sup> Another act declared that any person "called to any public trust" must, besides taking the oath of allegiance, assert under his handwriting "his majesty's royal prerogative as is expressed in the

<sup>34</sup> It is, of course, undeniable that Charles had a personal grudge against the men who had practically compelled him to sign the Covenant before owning him as king. Their democratic principles were distasteful to him. Hence his view that Presbyterianism was "no religion for a gentleman."

<sup>35</sup> *Naphtali*, pp. 153-154; cf. Kirkton, *History*, p. 132, and Fraser's Sermon on *Prelacy: an Idol*, p. 3.

<sup>36</sup> Thomson's *Acts of Parliament of Scotland*, VII., p. 18.

<sup>37</sup> Wodrow, *History*, I., pp. 244-245.

acts passed in the present parliament.”<sup>38</sup> An “act for the preservation of his majesty’s person, authority, and government” declared that all who, “by writing, printing, praying, preaching, libelling, remonstrating, or by any malicious and advised speaking, express, publish, or declare any words or sentences to stir up the people to the hatred and dislike of his majesty’s royal prerogative and supremacy in causes ecclesiastical or of the government of the Church by archbishops and bishops,” to be “incapable of enjoying or exercising any place or employment, civil, ecclesiastical, or military within this church and kingdom,” and to be “liable to such further pains as are due by law in such cases.”<sup>39</sup> The strenuous resistance—at first passive, but later active—to these measures did not deflect the civil rulers, such as Middleton, Rothes, and Lauderdale on the one hand, nor the ecclesiastics, such as Sharp on the other, from their course. Even while Lauderdale ostensibly adopted a policy of moderation, he took occasion to make this moderation flow from the mere good pleasure of an irresponsible despot. In the very year in which the first Indulgence was proclaimed (1669), the Estates, under the domination of Lauderdale, passed an “act anent the supremacy” reiterating the supreme authority of the monarch over all persons, and declaring “the ordering and disposal of the external government and policy of the Church” to be “an inherent right of the Crown,” and stating that ecclesiastical meetings and matters to be proposed and determined therein were to be settled as his majesty and his successors “in their royal wisdom shall think fit.”<sup>40</sup> This was suggestively followed by an “act anent the militia,” declaring “that it is his majesty’s prerogative royal and undoubted right to have the power of raising in arms the subjects of this kingdom, and of the commanding, ordering, and disbanding, or otherwise disposing of them as he shall think fit.”<sup>41</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Thomson’s *Acts*, VII., p. 45.

<sup>39</sup> *Ib.*, p. 378.

<sup>40</sup> Thomson’s *Acts*, VII., p. 554.

<sup>41</sup> *Ib.*, p. 554.

The mere granting of the Indulgence which the "act anent the supremacy" was required to legalise, was in itself the exercise of absolute State power, overriding all law, civil or ecclesiastical. The ministers who accepted the Indulgence actually held their parishes, not by the act of congregation, session, patron, or bishop, but simply  
 7 by the arbitrary will of the Government on certain specified conditions, so that the acceptance of the Indulgence actually broke up the body corporate of the Church, the indulged constituting a little Church within the Church, under the absolute government of the State. Brown of Wamphray did not overstate the position when he maintained that by the Act of Supremacy "the Church as to her ecclesiastical being is annihilated, and there is no more a Church as such, for that company is now metamorphosed into a formal part of the civil polity, and is like unto any other company or society of merchants, tradesmen, or the like."<sup>42</sup> And he clearly pointed out the ultimate bearing of this policy on the relation between the State and the individual. Speaking of the "screwing up of the prerogative in civil matters" and "the iniquitous acts and actings tending to the prejudice of the subjects as to their civil rights and privileges," he remarked that where rulers have destroyed the spiritual rights and privileges of their subjects "it is but a small matter to rob them also of what is their due as men and as members of the civil society."<sup>43</sup>

The comparative failure of the Indulgence and the steady increase of conventicles led in 1670 to the passing of the "act anent deponing," under which, as Wodrow expressly put it, "every good subject is bound down, not only to inform against his neighbour, his father, or mother  
 7 for going to a field meeting or house conventicle, but likewise to be a hangman to every one that shall be condemned for what was now made a crime."<sup>44</sup> By a

<sup>42</sup> John Brown's Testimony in *Testimonies of the Scots Worthies* (combining *Naphtali* and *Cloud of Witnesses*), Glasgow, 1846, p. 147; see also John Burnet of Kilbride's testimony against the Indulgence, *ib.*, pp. 128-133.

<sup>43</sup> *Testimonies of Scots Worthies*, p. 155.

<sup>44</sup> Wodrow, II., p. 168; Thomson's *Acts*, VIII., p. 7.

succession of acts following this, the Government claimed the right to interfere with and to regulate the private lives and habits of men. By the "act anent field conventicles," any minister who preached in the open or to a house full of people, if some happened to be outside the door, was made liable to death and confiscation, and all the "outed" ministers were forbidden to preach, pray, or expound Scripture except in their own houses in presence of their own families.<sup>45</sup> Two years later other acts made compulsory the baptism of children by the Episcopal clergy within thirty days of birth, on pain of a heavy fine,<sup>46</sup> and commanded all ministers within the kingdom to "preach yearly" on 29th May, giving thanks for the king's restoration.<sup>47</sup> The failure, both of these measures and of the feeble efforts of Leighton and others to reach a compromise,<sup>48</sup> did not deter the Government from embarking on a still more savage and repressive policy typified by the "letters of intercommuning" issued in 1675, outlawing a large number of prominent ministers and laymen,<sup>49</sup> and by the quartering of the "Highland host" on the south-western counties,<sup>50</sup> and by the crazy attempt to compel heritors and liferenters to engage themselves by a bond, not only for themselves, but for their tenants, not to keep or to be present at conventicles.<sup>51</sup> During the remainder of the persecution these repressive acts follow each other on the statute book with monotonous regularity. The imposition of the cess<sup>52</sup>—the military policy by which it was hoped to "make the militia effectual for all the ends

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<sup>45</sup> Thomson's *Acts*, VIII., p. 9.

<sup>46</sup> *Ib.*, p. 72.

<sup>47</sup> *Ib.*, p. 73.

<sup>48</sup> Wodrow, II., p. 175; Burnet, *History*, pp. 194-199. According to Mackenzie, Leighton was believed to be the "author" of the Indulgence. Archbishop Burnet of Glasgow objected to the Supremacy, and even Sharp "stated three pretenders to supremacy" in a sermon before Parliament—"the Pope, the King, and the General Assembly"—for which, Mackenzie hints, he was almost "turned off."—*Memoirs*, pp. 156-159.

<sup>49</sup> Wodrow, II., p. 266.

<sup>50</sup> *Ib.*, p. 378.

<sup>51</sup> *Ib.*, p. 366.

<sup>52</sup> Thomson's *Acts*, VIII., p. 221.

of a large standing army," the object being, as Wodrow said, "to bear down and ruin Presbyterians,"<sup>53</sup> the bond imposed after the Bothwell rising,<sup>54</sup> the passing of the Test Act,<sup>55</sup> and the oaths of abjuration framed and imposed by the successors of Lauderdale<sup>56</sup>—are the written testimonies of the determination of the Governments of the Stewart régime, not only to "keep the Presbyterians in good order," but to make the monarch absolute master of the consciences of the Scottish people and dictator of their private as well as their public lives. In the words of Shields, "they would have their laws to reach thoughts as well as actions."<sup>57</sup> Even Sir George Mackenzie admitted that "it was one of the main designs of our grandees . . . to get all power devolved over upon the Council, hoping thereby to make Parliaments unnecessary, and to enhance all the Government to themselves."<sup>58</sup> The military policy of the time and the powers entrusted to Turner, Ballantine, Dalziel, Claverhouse, Lag, and other officers flowed not from the obstinacy of the people, but from the thoroughgoing nature of the absolutist claims of the last two Stewarts. It is doubtful if there has been in modern history a more determined effort to break the spirit of a large section of a nation or to compel a whole people to bend to an absolute will.

This steady aim, which met with but a feeble and hesitating resistance in the purely political sphere, was from the beginning strenuously opposed by a large section of the Church. The opposition developed as the persecution grew in intensity, and several well-defined stages may be noted in this development: (i.) From 1660 to the Pentland rising in 1666; (ii.) from the suppression of this rising to the more formidable rebellion of 1679; (iii.) from 1679 to the Revolution in 1688.

(i.) During the first six years the Government, as already noted, had everything in its favour. The unbounded loyalty of the mass of the people, the wave of

<sup>53</sup> Wodrow, II., p. 493.

<sup>54</sup> Wodrow, III., p. 119.

<sup>55</sup> Thomson's *Acts*, VIII., pp. 243-245.

<sup>56</sup> Wodrow, IV., p. 157.

<sup>57</sup> *The Scots Inquisition*, p. 8.

<sup>58</sup> *Memoirs*, p. 167.

indifference which passed over the land, the division of the Covenanting party into two hostile factions, and the treachery of Sharp, the agent of the Resolutioners, all told heavily in favour of the Royalist policy. From the beginning, however, the violence and vindictiveness of the successive administrations of Middleton and Rothes tended to vindicate the misgivings of the Protesters. The executions of Argyll, Guthrie, and Warriston, the violence typified in the public burning of the Covenants and of Rutherford's *Lex Rex*, and the recklessness first of the "Drunken Parliament" in passing the Recissory Act, and secondly of the "Drunken Council" whose order for the ejection of several hundred ministers astounded and dismayed Sharp himself,<sup>59</sup> were not calculated to commend the wisdom of the new régime to the mass of the people. Nevertheless, Scotland as a whole continued loyal to the Government.<sup>60</sup> The rebellion of 1666, despite the tyranny which provoked it, and despite also the wild rumours that it was engineered in conjunction with the Dutch, was never of a formidable nature. The fact that the bulk of the population, even in Edinburgh, were unsympathetic, and that the peasantry, after the defeat of Rullion Green, were, in some cases, actively hostile,<sup>61</sup> indicated that the proportion of the population disposed to go to extremes was very small. Indeed, in this period field preaching was confined almost entirely to the south-western shires, where the Protesting party had wielded most influence.<sup>62</sup>

(ii.) The severities practised on the prisoners taken at Rullion Green not only discredited the Commissioner Rothes and the military commanders Turner and Ballantine; they tended to drive multitudes into sympathy

<sup>59</sup> Burnet, *History*, p. 101.

<sup>60</sup> Livingstone, in his letter to his parishioners of Ancrum, spoke of the opposition as a "small handful."—*Select Biographies*, I., p. 242.

<sup>61</sup> Wodrow, II., p. 34; *Naphtali*, p. 179.

<sup>62</sup> Letter of Blackadder to M'Ward, reproduced in *Memoirs*, 2nd edition, p. 178. "From the minutes of Jedburgh Presbytery, we find that conventicles were held in Teviotdale as early as 1666."—Stewart, *Covenanters of Teviotdale*, p. 213.

with the Covenanting party; and the more conciliatory attitude of the new Commissioner Lauderdale, at that time advised by Sir Robert Moray and the Earl of Tweeddale,<sup>63</sup> suggested to the community at large that the Government had begun in some measure at least to see the folly of a policy of mere repression. Both causes were probably potent in still further augmenting the ranks of the Covenanting party. In the seventies the spirit of disaffection and resistance to authority spread all over the south of Scotland, and even penetrated beyond the Tay. In a letter written to M'Ward in Holland in 1679, Blackadder, who was identified with field preaching from the beginning, remarked that by 1668 conventicles had appeared in Linlithgowshire and in the following year in Fife. In 1674 the movement spread to Clydesdale and Renfrewshire. In the same year conventicles became common in East Lothian, and in the following year in Teviotdale and the Merse. In 1677 the movement extended over Tweeddale, while in Mid-Lothian there were "many public preachings." In 1678 conventicles were held as far north as Perthshire, and in 1677 the movement touched Dumbartonshire, and was "like to break in towards the Highlands."<sup>64</sup> This is corroborated by a letter of the Bishop of Galloway to the Lord Register, in which that prelate complained bitterly of "the great and insolent field conventicles in Perthshire," and of a "constant field conventicle" attended by "several shoals of Highlanders in their trews, and many barelegged, flocking thither to propagate the mischief of the 'good old cause.'"<sup>65</sup> In 1670 weapons of defence were carried by worshippers at the famous conventicle at Hill of Beath, and this custom became more and more prevalent—an ominous practice which, in the eyes of the authorities,

<sup>63</sup> An excellent account of Moray's policy is to be found in *The Life of Sir Robert Moray*, by the late Alexander Robertson, pp. 123-147.

<sup>64</sup> Letter in *Memoirs*, 2nd edition, p. 180; Wodrow, II., p. 234; Kirkton, pp. 284, 364. Welwood, Letter to Mrs Ross, *Scots Worthies* (ed. by Wylie and Anderson, p. 465).

<sup>65</sup> Copy of Letter, Wodrow, II., p. 450.

foreshadowed another rebellion. The acute tension of the times was manifested by the skirmishes between the military and the armed Covenanters at Lilliesleaf, Whitekirk, and other places.<sup>66</sup> One of these encounters indeed developed into the battle of Drumclog, which precipitated the rising of 1679.

(iii.) This rising was long desired by Lauderdale,<sup>67</sup> who had abandoned the milder policy which marked the beginning of his régime. For a while, indeed, the Covenanters deliberately followed a policy of studied pacificism. When they "saw that a rebellion was desired, they bore the present oppression more quietly than perhaps they would have done if it had not been for that."<sup>68</sup> The now widespread disaffection expressed itself simply in passive resistance.<sup>69</sup> But two unforeseen events brought about the rebellion which Lauderdale and his associates desired to provoke. The one was the Drumclog skirmish; the other was the assassination of Sharp, which has been called "the Rubicon which, once crossed, meant civil war à outrance."<sup>70</sup> The rebellion, which ended disastrously at Bothwell, was a tactical error of the first magnitude, as some of the leaders clearly perceived. Not only was it disastrous in itself; it marked the transition from the policy of passive resistance, which had all but paralysed the Government in the seventies to that of active resistance, which gave the Government the excuse for intensifying the persecution with redoubled fury. It also brought to a head the differences between the two sections of the non-indulged Covenanters which now became acute. The

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<sup>66</sup> Kirkton mentions "bloody skirmishes"—"especially in Lothian," p. 364.

<sup>67</sup> Burnet records that Lauderdale said to him, "Would to God they would rebel, that so he might bring over an army of Irish Papists to cut all their throats."—*History*, p. 226.

<sup>68</sup> Burnet, *History*, p. 278.

<sup>69</sup> That the disaffection at this time was widespread is evident from the large number who refused to serve in the army raised to suppress the rebellion.—Wodrow, III., p. 177.

<sup>70</sup> Buchan, "Making of Modern Scotland," *Some Eighteenth Century Byways*, p. 132.

more radical party, which drew its inspiration from the exiles Brown and M'Ward, was openly rebellious in sentiment, and in addition began to advocate "separation from the indulged"—from the small number of ministers who had accepted the various Indulgences.<sup>71</sup> The more moderate party, led by Welch and Blackadder, were by no means clear as to the question of rebellion. Blackadder, indeed, deprecated the appeal to arms, holding that "the Lord called for a testimony by suffering rather than by outward deliverance."<sup>72</sup> Welch was more militant, and had been out at Pentland as well as Bothwell, but was at no time disposed to go the length of disowning the royal authority.<sup>73</sup> And the moderates, while refusing the Indulgences and lamenting the sad compliance of the indulged with Erastianism,<sup>74</sup> were not inclined to sever Christian fellowship with these men. As is well known, the cleavage between the two parties in the camp at Bothwell was an important factor in the collapse of the rebellion.<sup>75</sup> After Bothwell, the moderate party was practically eliminated. Welch retired to England, where he died in 1681, and though Blackadder continued to hold conventicles, his career was closed in 1681 by his arrest and imprisonment on the Bass. From 1680 onwards, the Cameronian party directed the movement. The Queensferry Paper, the magna charta of the party, was a document of far-reaching import, in which the right of the House of Stewart was challenged, and in which a state of war between the Cameronians and the Government was openly proclaimed—the former declaring themselves as a state within the State. The Sanquhar Declaration and the Torwood Excommunication were the logical outcome of this new attitude. At Sanquhar, Cameron threw off

<sup>71</sup> Welwood and Cameron seem to have been actually the first to advocate this course.

<sup>72</sup> *Memoirs* (2nd edition), p. 220, pp. 212-213.

<sup>73</sup> The declaration of oppressed Protestants at Hamilton (Wodrow, III., pp. 96-98) was published with Welch's approval.

<sup>74</sup> *Six Saints of the Covenant*, I., p. 208.

<sup>75</sup> Blackadder took no part in the rebellion.

allegiance to Charles II. and declared war on him as a tyrant and usurper, and at Torwood, Cargill cast the king and his advisers out of the fellowship of the Church. For eight years this party of the extreme left maintained the struggle, and under Renwick's leadership the movement assumed formidable proportions, large numbers "flocking after the persecuted gospel ordinances in the open fields."<sup>76</sup> By the formation of the United Societies, the whole of southern Scotland was covered with an organisation openly defying the Government and repudiating its authority. The Societies virtually constituted a state within the State. No one could be recognised as a member of a society meeting "who took any of the bonds tendered by the Government, who paid cess, locality or militia money to the civil authorities, or stipends to the curates or indulged clergy; made use of a government pass, voluntarily appeared before any court of law, supplied any commodities to the enemy, allowed another to do any of these things in their name, or who in any form recognised the ministry of indulged or silent Presbyterians."<sup>77</sup>

It is true, therefore, to say that the Revolution began in 1680 with the drafting of the Queensferry Paper, and that Cargill, Cameron, and Renwick were the pioneers of the great movement. At all events their policy was endorsed by the Parliaments of England and Scotland in 1689. The attempt to enslave the bodies and souls of men and to establish by a reign of terror an oriental despotism,<sup>78</sup> ended in ignominious failure, and it is well to

<sup>76</sup> Shields, *Life of Renwick, Biographia Presbyteriana*, II., p. 92.

<sup>77</sup> Hutchison, *Reformed Presbyterian Church*, p. 59.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. Kirkton, *History*, p. 87, for corroboration of this estimate. The author of *Naphtali*, as early as 1667, characterised the tyranny as worse than the Spanish Inquisition (p. 165), and Shields maintained that the conduct of the Government would have made "Turks and pagans ashamed" (*A Hind Let Loose*, p. 70). Taken all in all, Renwick's scathing indictment must be accepted by all who approach the subject with open minds: "I think we never heard of a generation of persecutors where spirits were more set on edge by hell fire than these; they persecute without compassion, they persecute without pity, so that they have given up not only with all things like Christianity, but with very human reason itself."—Renwick's *Sermons*, p. 212

remember that instead of two "divine rights" destroying each other, the claim of the Covenanters to civil and religious liberty was made good, and the action of the Cameronians in disowning the Stewart dynasty was abundantly justified.<sup>79</sup> The tactical blunder committed by the extreme Cameronians was their failure to realise that although the Covenants had not been reimposed, they had gained the substance of what they had contended for. In reality they had forgotten that the Covenants were but means to an end, called forth not only by the time-spirit, but by the special circumstances of the day.<sup>80</sup>

Thus during the twenty-eight years of persecution, the opposition to the Government gradually increased in volume and intensity until, at the Revolution, the whole of Lowland Scotland was unanimous that an end be put to arbitrary tyranny. By the close of the period a Whig party in politics had made its appearance, and many of the aristocrats and gentry were on this side. But during the earlier stage of the conflict the "upper classes" were chiefly on the side of Absolutism. The resistance to the tyranny of the Stewarts was, on the whole, a popular resistance; the Covenanting movement was, in the main, democratic. It is true that Blackadder was in his own right baronet of Tulliallan, that Peden was a laird, that Cargill was a lawyer's son, and Welch of ministerial lineage. The born leaders of human progress have never been men who have acted solely from selfish or class interests. Democratic and working-class movements have again and again had leaders from the aristocratic and middle classes. But the evidence is conclusive that the mass of those who attended field meetings and resisted authority generally, belonged to the poorer class of the community. Wodrow states that the prisoners who were executed after the battle of Rullion Green were "most of them illiterate persons, of very common education."<sup>81</sup>

<sup>79</sup> Defoe, an Englishman, emphasises this in his *Memoirs*, p. 164.

<sup>80</sup> Hume Brown, *History*, II., p. 454.

<sup>81</sup> Wodrow, II., p. 58.

As to the social standing of the average Covenanter, the testimony of the government officials who were engaged in the attempt to crush the movement shows clearly that a large proportion at least of those who were in opposition to the Government belonged to the humbler ranks. A royal proclamation indicates that the Government believed the strength of the movement to be among the poorer classes, for it was enacted that "all men in country habit" were liable to be challenged at sight and detained in custody.<sup>82</sup> The Lord Advocate, Sir George Mackenzie, expressly stated that John Welch, during his campaign in Fife, drew the "rabble" to follow him before he attracted the gentry,<sup>83</sup> and at a later date, in 1685, the Earl of Perth and Melfort, then Chancellor, in his speech at the opening of Parliament, railed bitterly against the Cameronians as a "new sect sprung up among us from the dunghill, the very dregs of the people."<sup>84</sup> More conclusive still are the lists of fugitives and martyrs. A roll of fugitives was issued along with a royal proclamation in 1684. Lairds are certainly represented in the list, but the bulk belong to the working class—weavers, shoemakers, smiths, masons, chapmen, servants<sup>85</sup>—and an analysis of the roll of martyrs shows that ploughmen, weavers, shoemakers, chapmen, and servant girls were among the irreconcilables.<sup>86</sup> Again, M'Ward, in discussing the persecution, speaks of the very poor who had suffered—those ejected from huts and little hole houses.<sup>87</sup> But perhaps the strongest testimony to the essentially democratic nature of the movement is that of Alexander Shields, who was in the closest touch with it in its later stages. He expressly remarked that if the nobility had supported the cause, it would have been "a great mercy and encouragement."

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<sup>82</sup> Letter of Renwick, Carslaw's *Life and Letters of James Renwick*, pp. 103-104.

<sup>83</sup> *Memoirs*, p. 272.

<sup>84</sup> Wodrow, IV., p. 262.

<sup>85</sup> *Ib.*, pp. 13-28.

<sup>86</sup> *Testimonies of Scots Worthies*.

<sup>87</sup> *Poor Man's Cup of Cold Water*, M'Ward's Tracts, pp. 159-161.

Their alliance would have been most welcome ; but this clear duty they had abandoned.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> *A Hind Let Loose*, p. 211. The view that the movement was in the main democratic is controverted by Mr Thomas Johnston, M.P., in his erudite work, *A History of the Working Classes in Scotland*, pp. 98-99, 109, 115. But Mr Johnston's contention would seem to be based on the tacit assumption on his part of the existence during the period of what is called in modern phraseology a "proletariat." In the seventeenth century, however, industrialism, with its accompanying "wage slavery," was virtually non-existent. Masons, ploughmen, chapmen, cottars, tenants, labourers, and servant girls, however, must be conceded to belong to the working class, and persons of such occupations are well represented in the rolls of martyrs and outlaws. Mr Johnston speaks of Renwick, a weaver's son, as belonging to the working class (p. 95).

## CHAPTER III

### THE COVENANTING MOVEMENT IN ITS RELIGIOUS ASPECT

"THE churchgoing of our ancestors," remarked Mr Andrew Lang in his sketch of the later Covenanting period, "was enthusiastic, because the prayers and sermons 'to the times' were often lively examples of party journalism."<sup>1</sup> This means that, in the main, conventicles were political meetings rather than religious gatherings.

This is a characteristic overstatement and a typical half-truth. The persecution was, in its essence, not religious but political. As has been already pointed out, the statesmen of the later Stewart period were neither religious fanatics nor ecclesiastical zealots. They were first and foremost politicians bent on establishing the royal supremacy, and upon realising the ideal of a servile state; and the Kirk was attacked because it had been the focus of organised opposition to royal pretensions. If, therefore, the object of the persecution was primarily political, it was inevitable that the resistance which the policy of the statesmen called forth should be of a political complexion. The laws which were passed through a servile Parliament in the execution of the Government policy bore hardly on many individuals, and the huge fines and excessive extortions were certain to drive into sympathy with the "outed" ministers large numbers who were not in the first instance particularly interested in religion or in theology. "It was no great wonder that not a few, who perhaps had no great sense of religion, joined with such as were forced to be in arms and wander up and

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<sup>1</sup> *History of Scotland*, III., p. 319.

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 down for their principles, and sided with any party who might procure their relief in their property and civil liberty so dreadfully invaded." <sup>2</sup> And as the persecution waxed fiercer, and a new generation of preachers arose who had never occupied pastoral charges and had grown to manhood under the shadow of oppression, the sermons and lectures delivered at conventicles tended to become more and more political in their complexion and application. It has been pointed out that while in general the older leaders concentrated chiefly on the Gospel as a message of "salvation through a crucified Saviour," and based their opposition to the Government chiefly on religious grounds, on the usurpation by the king of the prerogative of Christ, the younger men tended to deal more and more directly with political issues. And it has been hinted that the younger men were encouraged to do this by the support of those who flocked to conventicles from political motives, "not properly considering the difference between a proselyte to a party and a true Christian." <sup>3</sup> Wodrow refers to the "unguarded expressions of some probationers in their sermons," and "the excesses to which some of these young men had run in their discourses with the people." <sup>4</sup> But, indeed, it was inevitable that social and political themes should come to be of a paramount importance. The supreme fact, which no one could ignore, was the persecution. It dominated the whole country, and the people were hungering for a message for the times.<sup>5</sup> This they got from the non-indulged Covenanting ministers, who viewed religion and life as a connected whole. Thus the Covenanting

<sup>2</sup> Wodrow, III., p. 62.

<sup>3</sup> Aikman, *Annals of the Persecution*, p. 266.

<sup>4</sup> Wodrow, II., p. 500. This tendency was deprecated by the more moderate Presbyterians, and was not without influence in producing the cleavage between the parties of the right and the left.

<sup>5</sup> The experiences of recent years enable us to understand, in some degree at least, the angle from which religion and life came to be viewed, from 1660 to 1690. During the Great War of 1914-18, preaching became in great measure contemporary, and the war in greater or less degree coloured the message of practically every school of preacher, not only in Great Britain, but all over the world.

movement was forced to become a political one. But that its roots were essentially religious, is evident from the bare narration of its influence, spiritually and ethically, in the country from the Restoration onwards.

Accounts of the general moral and religious tone of the country at the Restoration differ considerably one from the other, but there can be little doubt that in general it was low. Even when Kirkton wrote his celebrated account of the "golden age" in the "interval between the two kings,"<sup>6</sup> he wrote of it in the past tense. He himself admitted that the effect of the Restoration was to change the disposition of the people,<sup>7</sup> and there is abundant evidence that, probably largely by way of reaction and largely by reason of apathy, there set in at the time among all classes a process of moral degeneracy.

Thus the governing classes in Scotland, taking their cue from the courts of Whitehall and Versailles, were notoriously dissolute. As Hill Burton, a historian not biased by his own prejudices in favour of the Covenanters, truly said, "The polished profligacy of Louis XIV.'s court was vulgarised when it passed on to St James'; but when it migrated to Holyrood, the rough ways of the Scots made it more hideous still."<sup>8</sup> Of its hideousness there can be no reasonable doubt. Burnet, in oft-quoted words, characterised it as a "mad, roaring time," when "the men of affairs were almost perpetually drunk."<sup>9</sup> John Welch certainly did not exaggerate when he spoke of the Estates as a "drunken parliament."<sup>10</sup> The truth of the charge was vouched for by Burnet's statement that the Act Recissory was only fit to be passed after a drunken bout.<sup>11</sup> When the Privy Council held its famous meeting in Glasgow, the act of ejection was passed when all the members present were "flustered with drink," except one,

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<sup>6</sup> *History*, pp. 64-65.

<sup>7</sup> *Ib.*, p. 65.

<sup>8</sup> *History of Scotland*, VII., p. 179.

<sup>9</sup> *History*, p. 82.

<sup>10</sup> Blackadder, *Memoirs*, 1st edition, p. 105.

<sup>11</sup> *History*, p. 80. "Within a day or two, when they had drunk higher, they resolved to venture on it."

Sir James Lockhart of Lee, who opposed the act;<sup>12</sup> and it is recorded that while the members of the Council were in Ayr, "the devil's health was drunk at the Cross there in one of their debauches about the middle of the night."<sup>13</sup> That these accusations of drunkenness and loose living generally were not mere malicious tales spread by the enemies of the Restoration statesmen is evident from the fact that Lauderdale reproved Rothes for his drunken habits,<sup>14</sup> while he himself was taken to task by Richard Baxter for the report that he "used to take his cups with excess and sometimes unto drunkenness."<sup>15</sup> Archbishop Leighton confessed to Burnet that Middleton and the other politicians who were instrumental in bringing about the restoration of Episcopacy "were so openly impious and vicious that it did cast a reproach on everything relating to religion to see it managed by such instruments."<sup>16</sup> An impartial survey of the lives and conduct of the Restoration statesmen in Scotland cannot fail to lead to an estimate little different from that of Renwick, who confessed he could not find a Biblical parallel to match their character and conduct. "They declare by their actings that they defy God; they declare their defiance against the Most High and cast out a flag against the heavens."<sup>17</sup> When account is taken of the debaucheries and vices of the rulers of Scotland, their betrayal of their former professions, their greediness and meanness, and, above all, their shocking cruelty, it will be

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<sup>12</sup> Wodrow, I., p. 282.

<sup>13</sup> *Ib.*

<sup>14</sup> *Lauderdale Papers*, I., p. 219.

<sup>15</sup> *Ib.*, III., p. 235.

<sup>16</sup> Burnet, *History*, p. 93. For Sharp's opinion of "Rothes and his crew," see p. 163.

<sup>17</sup> Renwick's *Sermons*, pp. 111-112. M'Ward expressed himself almost similarly at an earlier date: "No man would suffer himself to believe that even such a thing which had no cover of reason to cover the barbarity of its rage, would be put in execution." (*Poor Man's Cup of Cold Water*, Tracts, p. 167. Cf. Hallam's verdict: "No part of modern history, for so long a period, can be compared in the wickedness of the Government to the Scots administration of Charles II." Quoted by Lawson, *Covenanters of Ayrshire*, p. 75.)

seen that the verdict of the young leader of the Hillmen did not much overshoot the mark.

If such was the character of the Restoration statesmen, the churchmen—the new bishops and the “curates” generally—were scarcely more respectable. Little wonder that the saintly Leighton was uneasy at the meanness and selfishness of his fellow-prelates. By common consent, Fairfoul, Archbishop of Glasgow, was simply a buffoon—“a man both profane and scandalous,”<sup>18</sup> “a wag, insinuating, crafty, lecherous.”<sup>19</sup> Hamilton, a renegade Covenanter, has been characterised as a “contemptible driveller.”<sup>20</sup> Wishart, who was awarded the see of Edinburgh, was a known drunkard of profane speech.<sup>21</sup> Paterson, who afterwards filled the same see, was “one of the most notorious liars of his time, and vicious, base, and loose liver.”<sup>22</sup> Sharp, indeed, was possessed of a certain ability, and he appears to have been of temperate habits and, in later years at least, of moral life.<sup>23</sup> But his policy as one of the rulers of Scotland reveals him not merely as a traitor, but as a cruel, vindictive, irreligious man.<sup>24</sup> And even Leighton, while of pure life, devout, and even ascetic in his habits, showed a deplorable lack of righteous indignation against the conduct of the civil rulers, and a strange indifference to the innocent victims of the horrible cruelties which were inflicted.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Kirkton, p. 135.

<sup>19</sup> Hewison, *The Covenanters*, p. 138.

<sup>20</sup> Lee, *History of the Church of Scotland*, II., p. 320.

<sup>21</sup> Wodrow, I., p. 236.

<sup>22</sup> Row, *Blair*, p. 542.

<sup>23</sup> *The Covenanters*, II., p. 52. Hewison concludes that “there is no evidence to sustain the horrid charges” of youthful vice against Sharp.

<sup>24</sup> Burnet emphasised Sharp’s lack of true religion or piety (*History*, p. 187). According to Brown of Haddington (*Hist. Brit. Ch.*, II., p. 304), Sharp was reckoned by those who knew him “a downright atheist who affected to believe that there was neither God, heaven, nor hell.” Mr Osmund Airy, an unbiased impartial judge, maintains that Sharp’s letters to Lauderdale show him to have been “in the most comprehensive sense of the word, a knave *pur sang*.” (*Lauderdale Papers*, I., Preface, x.)

<sup>25</sup> Hewison, *The Covenanters*, II., p. 142.

In estimating the characters of the rank and file of the so-called "curates"—the men who were hurriedly thrust into the pulpits of the ousted ministers—it must be borne in mind that they were highly unpopular, and that stories of their scandalous living and disgraceful vices were eagerly retailed and implicitly accepted. Kirkton, while admitting that "because the body of them was certainly so debauched a company, common people would not believe an honest man would continue in their company,"<sup>26</sup> nevertheless draws a lurid picture of irreligion and immorality among the curates as a class. He himself, with his own ears, heard curates swear like debauched "red-coats" on the streets of Edinburgh. "No man," he asserted, "will deny they wallowed in our gutters drunk in their canonical gowns"<sup>27</sup>; and he collected a number of unsavoury stories of the prevalent licentiousness and drunkenness among them. Burnet's testimony is still more conclusive, for he was one of themselves, and, in his own words, "lived among them and knew them well." They were the worst preachers he ever heard—"ignorant to a reproach, many of them openly vicious," "a disgrace to their order."<sup>28</sup> Even a contemporary politician was driven to describe them as "insufficient, scandalous, and imprudent fellows."<sup>29</sup> In their contact with the members

<sup>26</sup> *History*, p. 179. Cf. Fraser, *Lawfulness of Separation*, p. 6.

<sup>27</sup> *Ib.*, p. 180. See also Burnet's "Memorial of Diverse Grievances" (*Miscellany, Scot. Hist. Soc.*, II., p. 353).

<sup>28</sup> *History*, I., p. 103. It is somewhat remarkable that men accused of ignorance and grossness were also charged with heresy. Thus Brown of Wamphray charged them with Arminianism, leaning to Popery (*Apol. Relation*, p. 276). Rev. Jas. Anderson, in his essay on the Martyrs of the Bass (*The Bass Rock*, p. 5), stated that "several of the ablest among them had imbibed and taught Popish, Arminian, Pelagian, and Socinian heresies." "They denied the supernatural and special influences of the spirit in regeneration." To question and deny orthodox doctrines requires a certain modicum of intellectual power, so we are driven to the conclusion that a proportion of them were men of a certain ability. This is shown by the fact that a number of them seceded from the Church from time to time, and some of them, notably Forrester of Alva, joined with the Covenanters. Cf. Burnet, *History*, p. 341.

<sup>29</sup> Earl of Tweeddale, in letter to Lauderdale, *Lauderdale Papers*, II., p. 207.

of the congregations into which they had been intruded, such men were singularly ill fitted to win either respect or esteem; and the baser elements in their characters had every opportunity of developing. They were driven by force of circumstances, partly by their own choice and partly by the absolute subservience of the Episcopal establishment to the State, to be spies and informers in the service of a tyrannical government rather than ambassadors of Christ.<sup>30</sup>

The degenerate condition of the Church as established by law serves as an index of the contemporary standard of morality among the influential classes in the community, and then as now the vices and pleasures of the upper class were eagerly copied by a mass of unthinking and ignorant people of the middle and lower orders. Even after the orgies of the Restoration period had come to an end, the moral state of the country was deplorable. The picture drawn by the Episcopalian Burnet of a "deluge of wickedness that hath almost quite overflown the land"—"scoffing at religion, swearing, drunkenness, and uncleanness"<sup>31</sup>—is as definite as that of Hutcheson, who spoke of the "thousands in Scotland who had given up prayer and worship,"<sup>32</sup> and is as lurid as that of the Covenanting lawyer, Sir James Stewart, who testified to the "universal decay of religion," and spoke of the period as "the last times, wherein sin aboundeth and the love of many is waxed cold."<sup>33</sup> Making due allowance for a tendency to exaggeration, natural under the circumstances, the testimony of the Covenanting leaders of the period is quite conclusive. Fraser of Brea speaks of the "great sluice of profanity and persecution" which broke loose.

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<sup>30</sup> Hill Burton (*History*, VII., pp. 319-320) writes sympathetically of the difficult part which the curates had to play. They had "long felt that sad depression and disheartening feebleness which no minister of religion can avoid feeling when he has no flock and not a particle of sympathy from the people around him."

<sup>31</sup> Burnet's "Memorial of Diverse Grievances" (*Miscellany, Scot. Hist. Soc.*, II., p. 355. Cf. *History*, p. 60).

<sup>32</sup> *Forty-five Sermons on the CXXX. Psalm*, p. 27.

<sup>33</sup> Introduction to *Naphtali*, p. 14.

"Lord," he wrote, "what a world was this! nothing but drinking, swearing, mocking of godliness, and the freedom of the country lost."<sup>34</sup> William Guthrie draws a picture of all ranks of men given up to profanity—"Scotland never so full of abominations."<sup>35</sup> Welwood's delineation is still more lurid. He depicts Scotland as a nation full of hypocrisy—"nothing but a whited wall"; "of all the noblemen and gentlemen in Scotland there shall not be twenty that shall appear for God."<sup>36</sup> "All ranks have rebelled against the Lord, and only a small remnant have kept their garments clean."<sup>37</sup> John Burnet of East Kilbride compared the country to Sodom.<sup>38</sup> John Kid, the martyr, spoke of the people of Scotland as not better, in a religious sense, than those in the wilds of America.<sup>39</sup> Cameron remarked on the "great ignorance, even of the very first principles of religion," and lamented the prevalence of swearing, lying, stealing, and adultery.<sup>40</sup> Renwick spoke of the widespread unbelief. "God is an unknown God to the most part of men";<sup>41</sup> and five truths are spoken of by him as largely disbelieved—God, heaven, hell, death, and judgment.<sup>42</sup> And at the very close of the persecution Shields was able to state that "we may say of Scotland—Satan hath his seat in it, for profanity abounds without control amongst all ranks from the highest to the lowest, from him that sits upon the throne to the beggar on the dunghill. There is not only wickedness set up and every abomination universal, but it is

<sup>34</sup> *Memoirs, Select Biographies*, II., p. 175.

<sup>35</sup> *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 145.

<sup>36</sup> *Ib.*, p. 363.

<sup>37</sup> *Ib.*, p. 344.

<sup>38</sup> *Testimonies of the Scots Worthies*, p. 129.

<sup>39</sup> Collection of Sermons appended to *Faithful Contendings Displayed*, p. 13.

<sup>40</sup> *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 409. He expresses sympathy with those who "take a liberty to lie, especially when soldiers come to the house and ask if such and such a one was there"; and he says, "Ye are not bound at the very first—if ye can without sin shift it—to tell them, but beware of lying on any account."

<sup>41</sup> Renwick's *Sermons*, p. 125.

<sup>42</sup> *Ib.*, pp. 165-166.

tolerated and entertained.”<sup>43</sup> Making every allowance for the angle from which these men viewed the country and its moral state, there can be no question of the truth of the judgment of a careful modern historian: “The social morality of the nation in the seventeenth century cannot be characterised as elevated.”<sup>44</sup>

The condition of the country as a whole is the necessary background against which we must judge the Covenanting movement. Within that movement practically the whole of the genuine religious life of the country was to be found;<sup>45</sup> and the consistent Covenanters formed a small minority. Only a “little handful,” as Livingstone testified, “laboured to keep their garments clean.”<sup>46</sup> It has to be remembered that even of the ministers of the Church at the Restoration less than a third were evicted,<sup>47</sup> yet the work of this small minority soon bore remarkable fruit. From a religious point of view the salient fact about the period of persecution is that it was a period characterised by successive religious revivals. The ejection from their pastoral charges of practically all the ministers who were distinguished not only for their opposition to tyranny, but for their sincerity of purpose, uprightness of life, and spirituality of mind had a twofold effect. Men like Blackadder and Welch, for instance, were thus set free for a campaign all over southern Scotland; in place of being confined to the country parishes of Troqueer and Irongray respectively, they had the Lowlands for their parish. They had the opportunity again and again of addressing large gatherings from Clyde to Forth, and Tweed and Solway to Tay. And these men—who had

<sup>43</sup> *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 603.

<sup>44</sup> Mackintosh, *History of Civilisation in Scotland*, III., 264.

<sup>45</sup> A small oasis in the Episcopal desert was to be found in the little group who imbibed Leighton's spirituality and mysticism, chief among them Henry Scougal, author of the *Life of God in the Soul of Man*. See Butler (*Leighton*, pp. 281-282), and C. G. M'Crie, *Confessions of the Church of Scotland*, pp. 73-84.

<sup>46</sup> Letter to his Parishioners, *Select Biographies*, I., p. 242.

<sup>47</sup> “Probably not more than 200 mansees were emptied up till the end of 1662.”—Hewison, *The Covenanters*, II., p. 163.

become apostles of the land as a whole—were not only enabled to keep alive among the people the spirit of resistance to tyranny; they carried on simultaneously an intensive evangelical campaign. By the close of the sixties, the times were propitious for a revival of religion—even on a limited scale—if only by way of reaction from the irreligious spirit of the Restoration period. The huge open-air gatherings, the subtle influence of natural scenery,<sup>48</sup> the spice of adventure and the element of danger, and also the personal magnetism of men who had sacrificed their prospect of worldly advancement to their cherished convictions, and whose calm courage, earnest and consistent lives could not fail to produce a strong impression of a Higher Power sustaining them, all conspired to attract and to influence considerable numbers, especially of young men and women who in quieter times would perhaps have paid little attention to spiritual things.<sup>49</sup>

During the seventies—in the period known as the “blinks,” when the holding of conventicles in defiance of the Government became a regular practice—there was undoubtedly a religious revival of considerable extent. “The Gospel was for some years generally preached in the fields through the south of Scotland, and that with success: God was unquestionably at work upon the hearts of the people . . . both in conversion and edification.”<sup>50</sup> In 1679 the movement reached its high-water mark. “It pleased the Lord to visit Galloway and Nithsdale with a great blink of the Gospel,” Blackadder recorded; and he noted that the movement not only covered the Lowlands, but touched Dumbartonshire, and was “like to break in towards the Highlands.”<sup>51</sup> “It

<sup>48</sup> Blackadder, *Memoirs*, 1st edition, pp. 198-207; Brown, *Covenanters of the Merse*, p. 106.

<sup>49</sup> “People listened to the Presbyterians with attention, because they preached upon hazard.”—Kirkton, *History*, p. 364.

<sup>50</sup> Wodrow, II., p. 497.

<sup>51</sup> Letter is given in full in Blackadder's *Memoirs*, pp. 178-181 (2nd edition only).

is beyond all doubt that there are many more converts than ever," Blackadder wrote to M'Ward.<sup>52</sup> Kirkton, while holding that the political conversions at field meetings outnumbered the purely religious,<sup>53</sup> speaks of the wonderful conversions that followed many of the sermons at conventicles, and he recorded that occasionally a curate would join with those who stood up to profess repentance.<sup>54</sup> "In many places people really changed their conversation and became real converts."<sup>55</sup> Dickson stated that in Fife during the period the people were willing not only to come to God, but "to run after His commandments with enlarged hearts."<sup>56</sup> Even more explicit and detailed is the evidence of Shields concerning this period: "The word of God grew exceedingly and went through at least the southern borders of the kingdom like lightning, or like the Sun in its meridian beauty; discovering so the wonders of God's law, the mysteries of His gospel and the secrets of His covenant, and the sins and duties of that day, that a numerous issue was begotten to Christ, and His conquest was glorious, captivating poor slaves of Satan and bringing them from his power unto God, and from darkness to light."<sup>57</sup> This revival appears to have been strictly ethical in character. Shields goes on to state that "many were truly converted, more convinced, and generally all reformed from their former immoralities," and that "even robbers, thieves, and profane men were some of them brought to a saving subjection to Christ."<sup>58</sup> Blackadder bore similar testi-

<sup>52</sup> *Memoirs*, 2nd edition, p. 181.

<sup>53</sup> *History*, p. 343. "At the great meetings many a soul was converted to Jesus Christ, but far more turned from the bishops to profess themselves Presbyterians."

<sup>54</sup> *Ib.*, p. 353.

<sup>55</sup> *Ib.*, p. 364. Blackadder records the conversion of a professed witch as a result of Welch's preaching; while his son records a typical instance of conversion following his own preaching.—*Memoirs*, 1st edition, pp. 180-182.

<sup>56</sup> *Warning Against the Indulgence*, p. 1.

<sup>57</sup> *A Hind Let Loose*, p. 82.

<sup>58</sup> *Ib.*, p. 83. Many other statements confirm the fact of a religious revival of great power at this period. Cf. Patrick Walker (*Six Saints of the Covenant*, I., p. 218); Fraser of Brea, *Select Biographies*, II., p. 325-326;

mony, referring to the marvellous doings of the Lord in the waste places of Northumberland, where "a people who were without God and Christ in the world appear now to have tenderness of heart among them." "Take a look of what God the Lord has done by a persecuted gospel."<sup>59</sup> At one communion service at Hazelrig, just over the Border, conducted by Gabriel Semple, a number of villagers attended, and "several on that occasion were brought to the Lord that had not the least profession of religion before, and continued in the same."<sup>60</sup> Semple's meetings continued to prosper, and "reports regarding the great blessing received spread far and wide."<sup>61</sup> Veitch bore similar testimony to the change wrought in the Border districts by the preaching in the open. "Is not this a change worthy a remark? To see a people who used to ride unweariedly through the long winter nights to steal and drive away the prize, now upon the report of a sermon, come from far, travelling all night to hear the Gospel."<sup>62</sup>

There can be little doubt that this widespread revival movement was checked by the disastrous rising of 1679, one result of which was the elimination of the moderate Covenanters as a vital force in the country. Welch retired to England after Bothwell, and only Blackadder continued to preach in the fields after the rising.<sup>63</sup> Henceforth the direction of the movement fell into the hands of the Cameronians. The fame of Richard Cameron, the joint

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Brown, *History of the Indulgence*, pp. 179, 269; *Faithful Contendings Displayed*, p. 4; John Kid's Testimony, *Testimonies of Scots Worthies*, p. 199. The testimony of an obscure youth, John Clyde, executed at Magus Muir, November 1679, is extremely valuable. He speaks of "those wonderfully owned and carried on by the Lord's powerful and mighty hand, not only to the conviction of some, but to the conversion of others." (*Ib.*, p. 239.)

<sup>59</sup> Appendix to *Faithful Contendings Displayed*, p. 100.

<sup>60</sup> Autobiography of Gabriel Semple (MS.) quoted by Stewart, *The Covenanters of Teviotdale*, p. 83.

<sup>61</sup> *Ib.*, p. 83.

<sup>62</sup> *Memoirs of Veitch* (ed. by M'Crie), p. 118.

<sup>63</sup> *Memoirs* (1st edition), p. 256. After Bothwell, he still continued to preach all over the Lowlands. His last conventicle appears to have been on Whitekirk Hill, near North Berwick, at the close of March 1681, about ten days before his arrest. (*Ib.*, p. 268.)

founder, with Cargill, of the extreme left wing, is bound up with the civil and political aspect of his message. It is not so generally realised that there was another and equally prominent strain in his preaching; he preached a fervent gospel to the individual soul. This evangelical note attracted notice for the first time when he was in Holland in 1679. Walker relates that "his private converse and exercises in families, but especially in his public in the Scots Kirk at Rotterdam, were very refreshing to many souls where he was close upon conversion."<sup>64</sup> This was a surprise to M'Ward, who had been led to believe that "he did preach nothing but babble against the Indulgence." M'Ward, however, found him a "man of a savoury gospel spirit, the bias of his heart lying towards the proposing of Christ and persuading to a closing with Him."<sup>65</sup> On his return to Scotland Cameron appears to have had the two sides to his message—social and evangelical. One who was present at a conventicle near Crawfordjohn, informed Walker many years afterwards that he heard Cameron, eleven days before his death, preach on the text: "You will not come to Me, that you may have life," and that during the sermon "he fell in such a rap of calm weeping, and the greater part of that multitude, that there was scarce a dry cheek to be seen among them."<sup>66</sup> An obscure martyr, John Malcom, in his dying testimony, spoke of the gospel preached by Cameron as "backed by the presence and power of Christ,"<sup>67</sup> and it has been truly said that "the best testimony to the power of Cameron's preaching is the fact that the tradition of that preaching has not died out among the people of the districts where he spoke."<sup>68</sup>

Within a year or two of Cameron's death, the whole of southern Scotland was covered by a network of secret

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<sup>64</sup> *Life of Cameron in Six Saints of the Covenant*, Vol. I., p. 223.

<sup>65</sup> Letter of M'Ward, *Earnest Contendings*, p. 156.

<sup>66</sup> Postscript on Cameron in *Six Saints of the Covenant*, II., pp. 113-114.

<sup>67</sup> *Testimonies of Scots Worthies*, p. 268.

<sup>68</sup> Herkless, *Richard Cameron* (Famous Scots), p. 111.

societies.<sup>69</sup> The moderate party, as has been pointed out, was now bereft of leaders, and had been terrorised into a sullen obedience, but the religious fervour which had distinguished the Covenanters as a whole before 1679 now reappeared in the fellowship of the United Societies. In the "rules and directions anent private Christian meetings," drawn up by the youthful Walter Smith, one of the earliest recruits of the Cameronian party, great stress was laid on prayer. Private meetings for prayer and conference were commended as tending to the glory of God, the advancement of religion, and the mutual edification of those present.<sup>70</sup> Members were urged to be "importunate with the Lord to go with them and meet with them."<sup>71</sup> These meetings naturally formed rallying points for the earnest and serious-minded people in each district. And so, when Renwick came over from Holland, the ground was prepared for another revival movement, and his preaching appears to have been attended by remarkable spiritual results. Shields, who was closely associated with the work of the United Societies, records that great numbers were brought to Christ "out of ignorance and darkness of nature." Such multitudes indeed flocked "after the persecuted gospel ordinances in the open fields" that Renwick was unable to comply with all the requests which were made for his services at conventicles.<sup>72</sup> Renwick himself, in a letter to his Dutch friends of date 18th February 1686, referred to the extension of his work. Despite executions and banishment of some and the defections of others, God "fills up their rooms again." And he remarked that doors had been opened in several places in Scotland where there was formerly no access. "I have observed my work, I say, to be now in some shires threefold and in some fourfold more than it was. . . . Also, it is almost incredible to tell what zeal, what tenderness, what painful-

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<sup>69</sup> Walker, *Life of Walter Smith in Six Saints of the Covenant*, II., p. 66.

<sup>70</sup> *Ib.*, p. 85.

<sup>71</sup> *Ib.*, p. 95.

<sup>72</sup> Shields, *Life of Renwick in Biographia Presbyteriana*, II., pp. 92-93.

ness in duty, what circumspectness in walk, in many young ones of ten, eleven, twelve, and fourteen years of age in many places in Scotland, which I look upon as one of the visible and greatest tokens for good that we have." <sup>73</sup>

On the whole it may be stated that, save within the bounds of the Covenanting movement,<sup>74</sup> religion in Scotland was practically dead, and that among the Covenanters a deep and fervent religious life existed. It is, of course, probable that among the conforming clergy there were a minority of earnest Christian men who exerted an influence for good. Leighton, indeed, may almost be called the founder of a school of mystical piety, which, through Henry Scougal, profoundly influenced the Wesleys in the eighteenth century.<sup>75</sup> Of Leighton's deep and true piety and close walk with God there can be no reasonable doubt; but the school which he founded was detached from the life of the nation, and had no message for the times.<sup>76</sup> Leighton prided himself on "preaching up Christ Jesus and eternity," in contradistinction to "preaching up the times."<sup>77</sup> Unfortunately, this meant for him and his followers blindness to the ethical and social issues of the day—a singular servility of spirit towards one of the most monstrous tyrannies of modern times.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>73</sup> *Life and Letters of James Renwick* (Carslaw), pp. 168-169.

<sup>74</sup> Wodrow stated that much blessing attended the ministrations of the indulged as well as the outed ministers (II., p. 280). There were, of course, many excellent men who accepted the Indulgence, such as Hutcheson, Wedderburn, and others; but possibly so far as the bulk of the indulged clergy were concerned, Howie of Lochgoin was not far wrong in his strictures: "The indulged were as great Gospel preachers (if not greater) than usually the more faithful were. And yet it is evident that they had no such success upon the hearts of the hearers. What could be ascribed as the reason of this but the want of faithfulness."—Introduction to *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 68.

<sup>75</sup> *Henry Scougal and the Oxford Methodists* (Butler), Introduction, pp. vii-ix.

<sup>76</sup> *Ib.*, p. 28 ff. Dr Butler remarks that "Leighton and Scougal were in the ecclesiastical strifes of the period—in them but not of them."

<sup>77</sup> Pearson, *Life of Leighton*, p. 9.

<sup>78</sup> Thus Leighton denied the ethical nature of social life, maintaining that conscience had no validity in that sphere. He sneered at the conscience which counselled resistance as "ignorance, stiffness, wilfulness, pride, arrogance, hypocrisy," and had no other advice to offer than submission to

The religious life of the Covenanting movement, while as deep and real as that of Leighton and his circle, instead of spelling retirement from the world, subservience to tyranny, and blindness to ethical issues, nerved the Covenanters to play their part in the great struggle for human liberty, and to mould the future destinies of their country.

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the Government, however tyrannical. "God hath given none power to resist and rise against the powers that are over us."—Butler, *Leighton*, p. 490.

## CHAPTER IV

### DOMINANT RELIGIOUS IDEAS

AFTER the creative period of the Reformation there followed what has been called "a period of formulation in the sphere of theology."<sup>1</sup> During this period controversy raged furiously alike among Lutherans and Calvinists; and among the latter the chief bone of contention was the doctrine of predestination. The great Arminian controversy, it is true, was staged in Holland, but its echoes reverberated all over Europe, and the decisive victory of high Calvinism profoundly affected the course of Protestant theology in the next two or three generations.

By the time when the Westminster Assembly was convened, Protestant thought had become fixed and static. Certain views had been clearly marked out as heretical and dangerous, and Protestant theologians felt it incumbent on them to formulate the faith in detail, and to leave no loophole for such heresies as the Arminian view of human freedom, the Socinian conception of the person of Christ, or the Quaker idea of the inward light to creep into orthodox theology. The deliberations of the Westminster Assembly issued in the publication of the Confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, which finally became the standards of the Church of Scotland, and from the time of their formulation were regarded as authoritative by Scottish Presbyterians.

Various causes conspired to render Scottish theologians, and the Kirk generally, unquestionably loyal to the findings of Protestant scholasticism. There was little or no opportunity for original religious thought or discussion, and

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<sup>1</sup> M'Giffert, *Protestant Thought Before Kant*, p. 141.

the Covenanters generally were in constant dread of any modification of doctrine or any uncertainty of formulation which might play into the hands of Rome. To the hard dogmatism formulated at the Council of Trent, they were able to oppose the logical system of Calvinistic thought embodied in the Confession and in the Catechisms. There was, in addition, another fact which rendered Scotsmen still more hostile to heresy. That the Arminian party in Holland and elsewhere lacked robustness on the question of the independence of the Church is indisputable. The reason is more obscure. As Lord Morley says, "Unseen, non-logical, fugitive, and subtle are the threads and fine filaments of air that draw opinion to opinion. . . . All history shows us how theological ideas abound in political aspects to match, and Arminianism, which in Holland itself had sprung into vogue in connection with the political dispute between Barneveldt and Prince Maurice, rapidly became in England the cornerstone of faith in a hierarchy, a ceremonial Church, and a monarchy."<sup>2</sup> Thus, by a strange paradox, a system of thought which, whatever its limitations, was more liberal than the high Calvinism which it opposed, became identified with political and ecclesiastical Absolutism and reaction. In England, too, Arminianism was in vogue among the Anglo-Catholic party which followed Laud—a party which was believed to be not only Arminian and Erastian, but secretly Popish. It is probably true, as Morley has contended, that Laud had no leaning towards Popery, and that his immediate object was the foundation of a patriarchate of the three kingdoms, under the jurisdiction of Canterbury.<sup>3</sup> But the fact that Laud the Erastian, who appeared to be working for an understanding with Popery, was also an Arminian, was sufficient to condemn the Dutch heresy in the eyes of Scotsmen who were carrying on a sore struggle for the maintenance of their civil and religious liberties. There can be no doubt that this was a decisive influence in stiffening the attitude of men like Rutherford and the

<sup>2</sup> *Oliver Cromwell*, p. 55.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*, p. 38.

later Covenanting thinkers into uncompromising hostility to any modification of the high Calvinistic doctrine. Only in one direction was there a substantial modification of rigid Calvinism. Federalism, or the "covenant theology," generally associated with the name of the Dutch theologian Cocceius, though dating from before his time, was much in favour during the seventeenth century, and found a footing in the later Calvinistic standards, including the Westminster Confession.<sup>4</sup> This covenant theology was in its essence a protest against the abstract and speculative nature of high Calvinism and Arminianism alike; it has been well defined as "Biblical rather than speculative in character,"<sup>5</sup> emphasising God's dealings with men in time, as recorded or hinted at in Scripture, rather than probing too deeply into the mysteries of the eternal decrees. It was, of course, on the safe side of the dividing line between Calvinism and Arminianism, for its major premise was the absolute sovereignty of God,<sup>6</sup> but by concentrating more on the concrete than the abstract it was rendered less arbitrary, though also less majestic and awe-inspiring than pure Calvinism.<sup>7</sup> Naturally, a system of thought which magnified the authority of Scripture had no need to fight against the time spirit; and men such as the leaders of the Kirk, who had entered into covenant with each other for certain ends, and had placed the whole nation under a covenant relation with God, welcomed rather than deprecated such a system of theology. It found full expression in a popular exposition of Calvinistic theology—*The Sum of Saving Knowledge*, the joint work of Durham and Dickson, published in 1650—which, though never adopted as a standard of the Church,

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<sup>4</sup> M'Giffert, *Protestant Thought Before Kant*, p. 154.

<sup>5</sup> *Ib.*, p. 153.

<sup>6</sup> Adams Brown, *Covenant Theology*, *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, IV., p. 216.

<sup>7</sup> "The blessedness of the mercy seat is in danger of being lost sight of in the bargaining of the market-place. The simple story of salvation is thrown into the crucible of the logic of the schools, and it emerges in the form of a syllogism." C. G. M'Crie on "Federalism," *Confessions of the Church of Scotland*, pp. 72-73.

soon took its place in popular esteem beside the Confession and the Catechisms. And the covenant theology took its place side by side with—if not indeed interwoven with—pure Calvinism in the religious thought of the time.<sup>8</sup> “The old theology of Scotland has indeed been described as a covenant theology.”<sup>9</sup>

In Covenanting circles heresy appears to have been practically unknown. A charge of Arminianism appears to have been preferred against one noted field preacher, John Welwood, but he stated emphatically in a letter that he had vindicated himself.<sup>10</sup> James Fraser of Brea, a really deep thinker, was charged not only with Arminianism, but also with its corollary, the belief in a universal atonement; and though the charge was denied, it seems to have been not entirely baseless.<sup>11</sup> But with this possible exception the Covenanters were orthodox of the orthodox in their theoretical opinions. Indeed, nothing came more readily to them than to charge the conforming clergy with all manner of theological error. Thus Kirkton blamed Gilbert Burnet for his sympathies both with Arminianism and Socinianism, and sneered at him for professing himself a man of “that high strain of moderation and charity that he has a bosom for every sect that wears the name of Christian.”<sup>12</sup> And, as already noted, the charge of laxity in theological doctrine was made almost indiscriminately against the curates as a class.<sup>13</sup> At all events, not only the leaders, but the rank and file of the Covenanters took special pride in their orthodoxy. Thus James Learmonth, the Whitekirk martyr, executed in 1678, expressly mentioned in his dying testimony his adherence

<sup>8</sup> It appealed to some minds more than others. It is the central theme of a volume of sermons by Alexander Wedderburn of Kilmarnock (who died in 1679), entitled *David's Testament Opened Up*.

<sup>9</sup> Walker, *Theology and Theologians of Scotland*, p. 40.

<sup>10</sup> *Scots Worthies* (Wylie and Anderson's edition), p. 466.

<sup>11</sup> See his life by Anderson in *The Bass Rock*, p. 130. Brodie recorded that “he was thought to incline to Arminianism in some things.”—Brodie's *Diary*, p. 391.

<sup>12</sup> Kirkton, *History*, pp. 192-193.

<sup>13</sup> Anderson, *The Bass Rock*, p. 5.

to the Confession of Faith and the two Catechisms ;<sup>14</sup> so did Isabel Alison and Marion Harvie, the two young women executed in 1681.<sup>15</sup> Others were still more explicit. James Stewart, "almost a boy for his years," who suffered on 10th October 1681, declared : "I adhere to that blessed transaction between the Father and the Son—that holy device devised from all eternity—the Father to send His Son, and the Son to come and satisfy divine justice, and so redeem lost men. . . . I adhere to our glorious work of Reformation, Confession of Faith, Larger and Shorter Catechisms . . . and I adhere to the *Sum of Saving Knowledge*, wherein is held forth the life and marrow of religion."<sup>16</sup> A more authoritative pronouncement was that of Michael Shields, clerk to the United Societies. In the letter of the Societies to "friends in Ireland," which he drafted in 1687, the Cameronian faith is affirmed in "the written word of God as the only rule of faith and manners," and adherence is affirmed to the Confession of Faith, the Catechisms, the Covenants, and other documents.<sup>17</sup>

These documents are elaborate and in parts mutually contradictory, and the fact that they were unquestioningly accepted theoretically does not give a very definite idea of the working conceptions of the time. The Westminster Confession is a very easy target for criticism. To construct an apparently overwhelming case against its formulation of Calvinistic theology is a comparatively simple task, and this being done, it is easy to ridicule the opinions of those who accepted it. Buckle, the brilliant English writer who attempted the examination of the Scottish intellect, affirmed that in the eyes of the Scottish clergy "the Deity was not a beneficent being, but a cruel and

<sup>14</sup> *Testimonies of Scots Worthies*, p. 187.

<sup>15</sup> *Ib.*, pp. 305, 317.

<sup>16</sup> *Ib.*, p. 386. John Potter, an Uphall farmer, also referred to the "transaction."—*Ib.*, p. 294.

<sup>17</sup> *Faithful Contendings Displayed*, p. 300. The vagaries of the Gibbites can hardly be dignified by the name of heresy. Gib, their founder, appears to have been unbalanced mentally.—Wodrow, III., p. 349.

remorseless tyrant,"<sup>18</sup> "a God of terror instead of a God of love,"<sup>19</sup> and that in their view "all mankind—a very small portion only excepted—were destined to eternal misery."<sup>20</sup> It has been affirmed that Christ to the Covenanters was a mere speculative abstraction<sup>21</sup> instead of a living historical figure or a spiritual presence, and that the religion of the time was little better than formalism, with the Sabbath day taking the place of the Mass as an object of idolatry.<sup>22</sup> It is possible to find confirmation for this view of the religion and theology of the Covenanters by collecting together extracts from minutes of sessions and presbyteries, paragraphs and phrases in sermons which have been wrenched from their context, and the utterances of obscure extremists who have been erroneously supposed to be representative men. But a deduction arrived at by such means gives no true index of the dominant religious conceptions of the time. Too often has an erroneous conclusion been reached because men have begun by considering the Confession as the accepted creed of the time, and have then deduced what they believe men who thus accepted it must have thought. The most fruitful line of investigation, in order to reconstruct the world of religious ideas in which the Covenanters lived, is through the study of the contemporary literature—outside of systematic theological writings. In the lectures and sermons of ministers, dying testimonies of martyrs, in the tracts for the times, in the diaries and journals and memoirs, the working conceptions of the period are much more faithfully represented than in theological treatises, however massive in thought and ambitious in purpose; and much more so than in the theorisings of modern writers who have deduced from the Confession what the men of the period ought perhaps logically to have believed.

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<sup>18</sup> *History of Civilisation*, III., p. 239.

<sup>19</sup> *Ib.*, p. 245.

<sup>20</sup> *Ib.*, p. 239.

<sup>21</sup> See Walker's *Theology and Theologians of Scotland*, p. 175.

<sup>22</sup> *Ib.*, pp. 180-181

The current religious ideas of the day may be conveniently grouped round the two master concepts—the Divine Sovereignty, and Christ's Headship over the Church. ✓ The first of these was common to all Calvinists.<sup>23</sup> The second was more particularly a Scottish product, sharpened and deepened by the conflicts of the time. Round the first of these dominant convictions were grouped the chief theological doctrines; and round the second, the ethical. Both were, theoretically at least, grounded in another important doctrine. The doctrine of Scripture as a definite law code, inspired and infallible, was indeed the corner-stone of the whole structure of later Calvinism:<sup>24</sup> hence, indeed, the uncompromising hostility to Quakerism which characterised all the Covenanting leaders without exception, and the general timidity displayed by the Scottish theologians and preachers in regard to the activities of the Holy Spirit. It is, of course, true that even the Westminster divines themselves admitted, as the Quaker apologist Barclay was not slow to point out—though they did so in a timid and halting way—that the Scriptures were ultimately guaranteed by the Holy Spirit,<sup>25</sup> and this fact was not denied. Indeed, William Guthrie, who had a distinctly mystical strain in his thought, explicitly stated that "the spirit of the Lord must witness the divinity of the Scriptures, and that it is the infallible Word of God, far beyond all other arguments that can be used for it."<sup>26</sup> But, on the whole, the Covenanters were afraid of the appeal to the Holy Spirit—implicit though such actually is in Protestantism—and were bitterly hostile

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<sup>23</sup> "The Westminster creed makers grounded their confessional structure upon the Sovereignty of God, being profoundly convinced that, to use their own language, 'the light of Nature sheweth that there is a God, who hath lordship and sovereignty over all.'"—M'Crie, *Confessions of the Church of Scotland*, p. 62.

<sup>24</sup> It is significant that while the first Scots Confession (1560) begins with the doctrine of God, the first article of the Westminster Confession is entitled "Of the Holy Scriptures."

<sup>25</sup> *Apology*, p. 65.

<sup>26</sup> *The Christian's Great Interest* (new edition, 1901), p. 78. Guthrie was in great measure a mystic, as is shown by his chapter on the proof from experience, pp. 70-86.

to those sects which emphasised the work and guidance of the Spirit. They feared the undermining of the authority of the Bible, and they regarded the Quakers with aversion because of their emphasis on the "inward light." Thus John Livingstone, ordinarily meek and tolerant, declared that "Quakerism overthrows all the grounds of Christian religion," and that Quakers "should not be looked on as Christians," even hinting darkly at "much devilry among them."<sup>27</sup> M'Ward bracketed Quakers with atheists,<sup>28</sup> and even the spiritually minded Fraser, who confessed to a certain bias towards Quakerism, declared it a "device of Satan to cast off the Scriptures."<sup>29</sup> And thus, while the activity of the Holy Spirit was held to be necessary to the saving knowledge of Christ,<sup>30</sup> and while the Spirit was worshipped as one of the persons of the Trinity, yet the range of the Spirit's activity was regarded as circumscribed. Thus, in contradistinction to Quaker teaching, it was stated in an authoritative outline of belief: "We absolutely deny that the Spirit bringeth new revelations in matters of doctrine, worship, and government; but only that he opens the eyes and enlightens the understanding, that we may perceive and rightly take up what is of old recorded in the Word by the same Spirit."<sup>31</sup> The principle that new revelations are possible, Wedderburn maintained, "fathers on the Spirit of Christ, the spirit of truth, all the horrid imaginations of man's own heart. What a dreadful thing it is that the corrupt heart invents and imagines, and then fathers it on the Spirit of God, and speaks lies in His Name."<sup>32</sup> "The proper work of the spirit of truth is not to reveal new truths, but to open the eyes to the truths already revealed." Hutcheson, indeed, sharply distinguished between proof of divinity

<sup>27</sup> *Select Biographies*, I., p. 253.

<sup>28</sup> *The True Nonconformist*, p. 365.

<sup>29</sup> *Select Biographies*, II., p. 192.

<sup>30</sup> Brought out by Guthrie in the *Christian's Great Interest*.

<sup>31</sup> *An Apology for, or Vindication of, the Oppressed Presbyterian Ministers* (1677), Introduction, p. 11.

<sup>32</sup> *David's Testament Opened Up*, pp. 281-282.

and assurance of divinity.<sup>33</sup> The function of the spirit, he maintained, is not to prove the divinity of the Scriptures, but "to assure us they are divine."<sup>34</sup>

This view of Scripture as an infallible standard, divinely inspired, common to the Scholastic period of Protestantism, is in the light of present-day knowledge open to many grave objections. The chief deficiency in the Covenanting position in regard to Scripture was not so much the lack of the historical sense and the absence of the idea of progressive revelation and moral evolution—which defects were only to be expected owing to the limitations of the age. More significant was the failure to judge the teaching of Scripture as a whole by the teaching of Christ. Considering the stress which was laid on the doctrine of the Headship of Christ over the Church, it is remarkable that the Headship of Christ over Scripture was not asserted.

The existence of discrepancies between the various books of Scripture was not denied, but the problem does not appear to have been seriously grappled with. A theory of the interpretation of Scripture was roughly outlined by Brown of Wamphray in his tract, *The Banders Disbanded*, in the course of a discussion of the words of Christ, "Resist not evil." The terms of the prohibition, it is said, are "general, illimited, and indefinite." "But if you should answer here that though that particular passage of Scripture doth not characterise nor discriminate what sort of evil we are to resist and what not, yet many other parallel places do. Even so say I, that although one particular passage of Scripture may command peaceable living in general, absolute, and indefinite terms, yet other parallel scriptures do expressly qualify and restrict the same." "Though there were but one passage in the whole Scripture that either expressly mentions or so insinuates these qualifications and restrictions of peaceable

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<sup>33</sup> Fleming maintained that the Scriptures were verified by the justice of God in history.—*Fulfilling of Scripture*, p. 250.

<sup>34</sup> *Forty-five Sermons on the CXXX. Psalm*, p. 315.

living, as thereupon we have good ground to qualify and restrict the same, I say that even that one passage is to be the rule and standard by which all the rest, indefinitely so expressed, are to be interpreted and understood in reference to peaceable living, not contrariwise."<sup>35</sup>

The ultimate outcome of this principle was that a command of Christ could be qualified or cancelled out by an appeal to the Old Testament. A single Old Testament example sufficed for the more extreme party to justify not only insurrection but assassination. Thus Richard Cameron commended the action of Jael,<sup>36</sup> and Alexander Shields was able to show that assassination might be resorted to as a last desperate resort by enumerating instances recorded in the Old Testament.<sup>37</sup> And the antagonism to Romish ceremonies and to Romish reverence for images was undoubtedly stimulated by the vigorous denunciation of idolatry in the historical and prophetic books of the Old Testament.<sup>38</sup> Indeed, to the supreme place given to Scripture as an authoritative standard of conduct, and to the equality of the Testaments which was a necessary corollary from the theory of plenary inspiration, there followed both the virtues and limitations of the Covenanters. Theoretically they failed to make Christ and His teaching the test of Scripture examples. In practice, however, the devotion to Christ as a person and a presence entailed the ethical following of Him.

I. "The glory of the Reformed Church in the past lay undoubtedly in its doctrine of God."<sup>39</sup> What Professor Hastic affirmed of the Reformed Church as a whole is eminently true of the Covenanting movement in Scotland. As already mentioned, the doctrine of the Divine sovereignty was one of the two dominant religious

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<sup>35</sup> *Banders Disbanded*, in M'Ward's Tracts, pp. 71-72. Cf. M'Ward's similar positions in *Earnest Contendings*, pp. 76-77.

<sup>36</sup> *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 415.

<sup>37</sup> *A Hind Let Loose*, pp. 444-489.

<sup>38</sup> This was clearly shown by Hastic, *Theology of the Reformed Church*, pp. 45 ff.

<sup>39</sup> *Ib.*, p. 7.

conceptions of the age. The view of God was like all others essentially based on Scripture, but this did not preclude the existence of a kind of natural theology, for the Covenanting writers and thinkers were in line with the true tradition of the Reformed theology, especially the Zwinglian type. In the literature of the period we find many traces of a view of Nature as a revelation of God. Thus Hutcheson remarked that "the visible heavens in their beauty and light are demonstrations of the glory of God."<sup>40</sup> And this tendency to "see" God in Nature was strongly reinforced by the conditions of life brought about by the persecution. The field conventicle, assembling in the open, under the blue sky or the lowering clouds, in brilliant sunshine or in wind and rain, on the level moorland or beneath the shadow of the mountain, or in view of the expanse of ocean, was conducive to the development of the sense of God's presence in the material world. Blackadder recorded in his detailed account of the famous communion in 1674 at East Nisbet in the Merse, at which he was a leading figure, the impression made on him by the natural environment. The "spacious brae" covered with "delightful pasture," the "sweet and calm Sabbath morning" with its "clear blue sky," was the setting for the religious exercises of the day. "There was a solemnity in the place befitting the occasion and elevating the whole soul to a pure and holy frame," stimulated by confidence in the "invisible protection of the Lord of Hosts."<sup>41</sup> The sense of the presence of God in Nature was quaintly expressed by Peden when he spoke of the mist as the lap of God's cloak.<sup>42</sup> And Cameron, in a lecture on the ninety-second psalm, asked his hearers: "When ye look to the moon, to the stars, to the rivers and brooks, do ye see the hand of God in them? When ye look to the very

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<sup>40</sup> *Exposition of the Book of Job*, p. 378.

<sup>41</sup> Blackadder, *Memoirs*, 1st edition, pp. 198-207.

<sup>42</sup> Peden's actual words were, "Cast the lap of thy cloak on old Sandy and thir poor things, and save us this one time." Walker says, in the meantime "there was a dark cloud of mist came betwixt them."—*Six Saints of the Covenant*, I., p. 74.

corn ridges, do ye see the hand of God in them and in every pile of grass? But how few see anything in the creation," yet "there are some that see more of God in looking to the creatures than in many sermons."<sup>43</sup> Walter Pringle of Greenknowe, a devout layman, also saw the "power, wisdom, goodness, and glory of God" in "every pile of grass and every moving creature."<sup>44</sup>

Renwick appears to have been assailed in early years by doubts born of a kind of thought akin to modern naturalism or agnosticism. Relapsing into a labyrinth of darkness, he "was so strongly assaulted with temptations of atheism that, being in the fields and looking to the mountains, he said, if these were all devouring furnaces of burning brimstone he would be content to go through them, if so be that thereby he could be assured that there was a God."<sup>45</sup> He surmounted these doubts, but they left their traces on him; for in his thought the strain of theism or natural theology was an important factor. In a letter of date 18th February 1686, addressed to his Dutch correspondents in Friesland, Renwick gave an exposition at considerable length of the faith that was in him. The doctrine outlined is essentially philosophic. He asks his correspondents to take a look at God, "as He is, the Being of beings, having being of Himself independent of all other beings, and upon whom all other things depend in their being and operations." Then he asks, "Do not all the pieces of the creation—heaven, earth, and sea, sun, moon, and stars—the commonest and unworthiest creature that moveth upon the earth—bear large traces of His wisdom, power, and goodness?"<sup>46</sup> "Heaven and earth," he said in one of his sermons, "publish and preach forth the knowledge of God: sun,

<sup>43</sup> *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 422.

<sup>44</sup> *Select Biographies*, I., p. 437.

<sup>45</sup> Shields, *Life of Renwick*, p. 9 (*Biographia Presbyteriana*, II.). It is interesting to notice that Livingstone was also quite alive to the subtle attractions of naturalism. "I have often showed you," he wrote to his flock at Ancrum, "that it is the greatest difficulty under heaven to believe that there is a God and a life after this."—*Select Biographies*, I., p. 226.

<sup>46</sup> *Life and Letters of James Renwick* (ed. W. H. Carslaw), pp. 161-162

moon, and stars are all written over in legible characters, teaching us the knowledge of God; the earth, trees, mountains, hills, and valleys, yea, and the piles of grass, are all written over, backside and foreshide, with legible characters of the knowledge of God.”<sup>47</sup> The youthful Cameronian leader was not without a strain of nature-mysticism. In a letter written in 1685 he referred to the joy which he had experienced while lying on the open moorlands “when others were sleeping”; “when the curtains of heaven had been drawn, when the quietness of all things, in the silent watches of the night, has brought to my mind the duty of admiring the deep, silent, and inexpressible ocean of joy and wonder, wherein the whole family of the higher house are everlasting drowned, each star leading me out to wonder who He must be who is the Star of Jacob, the bright and morning Star, who maketh all His own to shine as stars of the firmament.”<sup>48</sup> A much more obscure person has left on record his account of a similar experience to that of Renwick. John Stevenson, a land labourer of Dailly, in Carrick, after being “violently assaulted by atheistical thoughts of God,” was reassured by the Divine revelation in Nature. The merciful God, he said, caused “His perfections to shine on my soul while gazing on His wonderful creature, the sea,” and manifested Himself in water, grass, and flowers.<sup>49</sup> And to the annalist Law, deep thoughts concerning God were suggested by the elephant which was brought to Scotland in 1680. “Let this great creature on earth and the whale at sea be compared with a midge and minnow, and behold what deep counsel and great wisdom and power is with the great God, the creator and preserver of both.”<sup>50</sup> From the harmonious motions of the heavens Fleming deduced the truth that “there must be a ‘first mover,’ not subject to motion or change.”<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Renwick's *Sermons*, p. 167.

<sup>48</sup> *Life and Letters of James Renwick*, p. 130.

<sup>49</sup> *Comforting Cordial, Select Biographies*, II., p. 417.

<sup>50</sup> *Memorials*, p. 177.

<sup>51</sup> *Fulfilling of Scripture*, p. 298.

(i.). This view of God given by natural theology was thus an invaluable adjunct to the general theistic concept of the period, furnishing as it did concrete examples of the Divine sovereignty over the world. God, as conceived by Calvinistic theology, was absolute sovereign over man and the world, and His sovereignty was manifested in His oversight of the world and His guidance of human destiny. "The eyes of God," said M'Gilligen, "look to and fro through the Earth."<sup>52</sup> "There is," said Renwick, "an all-seeing eye of God that knows well what is in man and what is designed by all men. . . . There is not a hiding place for man to get his sin hid from God."<sup>53</sup> And even as God is absolute overseer of the world, so He is absolute governor—ruling over all lands and all men as over "so many insects."<sup>54</sup> There is no limit to His power. Despite the credulity of the age, however, miracles, in the Biblical sense, were not deemed as likely to happen. Hutcheson, indeed, expressed his preference wherever possible for a naturalistic interpretation even of Scriptural passages which might be believed to allude to miraculous occurrences.<sup>55</sup> Blackadder, it is true, expressed the view that the Almighty could as easily perform miracles then as in times past.<sup>56</sup> But a distinction was ordinarily drawn between miracles, interferences with the natural order, and wonders, the manifestations of His overruling power. God uses many different means for the accomplishment of His great ends—such instruments and means "as may nonplus the wisest." Even His enemies may be His instruments.<sup>57</sup> "We need not stand to give you reasons why He worketh so wonderfully, so far beyond our thoughts and reckonings," Blackadder said. "It may suffice us that He is God and not man; and who dare counsel Him?"<sup>58</sup> "Our power is gone," declared

<sup>52</sup> Speech before the Provost of Fortrose, Wodrow, II., p. 334.

<sup>53</sup> Renwick's *Sermons*, p. 392.

<sup>54</sup> *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 87.

<sup>55</sup> *Exposition of Book of Job*, p. 115.

<sup>56</sup> Blackadder's Sermon appended to *Memoirs*, 1st edition, p. 364.

<sup>57</sup> *Ib.*, p. 356.

<sup>58</sup> *Ib.*, pp. 358-359.

Cameron, "but He will not lack ways to do it, though His people should never draw a sword."<sup>59</sup> For in the thought of the time God was a living God, and "though we be under a cloud for the time by the present discouragements, what the matter of that? We cannot mistrust the Lord"<sup>60</sup> "The times and seasons are not for us to know, but they are in His hand, who should not be inquired after, for He doth in heaven and earth what pleaseth Him, and who may say what doest Thou?"<sup>61</sup> And just as the sovereignty of God is manifest in the outward destinies of men and nations, so in the more subtle, invisible stirrings of the soul. "Ere a soul can believe he must be called of God," Fraser concluded, "as it is God that calls, so it is God that maketh to answer this call, and the creature is but merely passive."<sup>62</sup> "Those regenerated render no help in it. There is nothing in them to move the Lord to change them. Neither when this work is begun can they carry it on without Him," for man has neither power nor will. The ultimate power is God, whose work is irresistible.<sup>63</sup> And "God can ply and does ply the hearts of all as He will."<sup>64</sup>

(ii.) But although God is eternally active, using various ways and means to advance His purposes, there is no caprice or variableness in Him. He is above all law, it is true, but yet He does nothing contrary to His nature;<sup>65</sup> for though absolute, He is holy and righteous,<sup>66</sup> and any changeableness in Him is apparent only. He may appear to change, but the change is in man. Human thoughts of God, in Cameron's striking phrase, "ebb

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<sup>59</sup> *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 451. Cf. Michael Bruce: "I believe that I shall live and see the delivery of the Kirk of Scotland, being assured that the Lord will pity His church."—Sermon at Barnbog, quoted in *Life of Alexander Reid*, p. 19.

<sup>60</sup> Dickson, Sermon in *Faithful Contendings*, Appendix, p. 120.

<sup>61</sup> Blackadder, Sermon in *Memoirs*, p. 353.

<sup>62</sup> *Memoirs, Select Biographies*, II., p. 163.

<sup>63</sup> Shields, *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 611.

<sup>64</sup> Sir Robert Hamilton in letter to friends in Scotland, *Faithful Contendings*, p. 92.

<sup>65</sup> Brown, *Apologetical Relation*, p. 331.

<sup>66</sup> Hutcheson, *Exposition of Book of Job*, p. 133.

and flow,"<sup>67</sup> but His nature is unchangeable;<sup>68</sup> there is no shadow of change with Him.<sup>69</sup> Certainly His presence is not always felt. He had in the past forsaken those who had forsaken Him,<sup>70</sup> for there is such a consequence, as M'Ward pointed out, as "sinning Him away";<sup>71</sup> and when this takes place and God hides His face from His people, the cause is sin, and along with sin, hypocrisy.<sup>72</sup> Thus the Lord's coming to a land, said Renwick, has different effects upon "different sorts of folks." His aspect is "joyful to some, terrible to others";<sup>73</sup> and it is only sin that makes God an enemy.<sup>74</sup>

From the Divine holiness the Divine justice is a necessary and logical deduction. And from this postulate and deduction the persecuted party derived that unquenchable hope in the certainty of Divine judgment on the persecutor which enabled them to maintain an apparently hopeless struggle. As Wedderburn pointed out, there is nothing arbitrary about the moral law. "It proceeds from the same omnipotent creative God who laid the foundations of the great earth."<sup>75</sup> From the fact that God is "a very holy and a spotless God," not that "He is an unmerciful God or any way cruel," Welwood deduced that "infinite indignation that He hath against sin," and on one occasion he asked, "Do ye believe that hellish prelates, abominable curates and selfish, wicked noblemen—do ye think that these gentlemen will escape the hand of God? I say, they shall not at all. As He lives He will thresh them down and their houses and make their posterity beggars."<sup>76</sup> The wicked may seem

<sup>67</sup> *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 456.

<sup>68</sup> Cargill, *ib.*, p. 503; *Life of Alexander Reid*, p. 70.

<sup>69</sup> Renwick, *Life and Letters*, p. 17.

<sup>70</sup> *Naphtali*, pp. 117-118.

<sup>71</sup> Letter to Cameron and Cargill on reception of Duke of York, *Earnest Contendings*, p. 331.

<sup>72</sup> Renwick's *Sermons*, p. 48.

<sup>73</sup> *ib.*, p. 100.

<sup>74</sup> *ib.*, p. 465.

<sup>75</sup> Wedderburn, *The Believer's Privileges*, p. 18.

<sup>76</sup> *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 362.

to prosper, but God is laughing at them.<sup>77</sup> The wicked are but "poor bits and atoms of clay" helpless before the Lord of Hosts.<sup>78</sup> They may appear to prosper but their prosperity is very uncertain. "They stand upon slippery and sliddery stones, and shall soon fall heels-over-head";<sup>79</sup> and if the overthrow be long deferred, it will be all the more complete, for God is waiting till they have put on the cope-stone of their iniquities.<sup>80</sup> In M'Ward's daring words, "we impose a necessity—if I may speak so—upon a High and Holy God to speak. . . . And in that day when He gives His voice, we may expect it will be like hailstones and coals of fire."<sup>81</sup> And from Divine judgment on sin there can be no escape. It is inevitable, for it flows from the nature of things. In a lecture on Jeremiah xiii. 12-17, Cargill expounded a philosophy of this Divine judgment. "According to the universal madness" of kings and prelates, "so will the punishment be. . . . For any wise man in the world may see that their actions indicate madness"—a madness that brings on inevitable ruin, though it tarry for a while.<sup>82</sup> Cargill did not doubt that this judgment was imminent. In a striking legal metaphor, he declared that God was about to hold a circuit court. "The Master of Scotland must come and keep a court in Scotland,"<sup>83</sup> and not only in Scotland, but in other nations also. From this truth, that God's justice is the ultimate fact, much consolation was to be found. "In that day," said Blackadder, "who lives to see it shall ye say He is a righteous God, for He appears for the help of His people," for He "will take vengeance of His enemies for the blood of His servants," and "enemies shall be forced to say and see

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<sup>77</sup> Cameron, *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 455; Brown, *Apologetical Relation*, Introduction (Epistle to Reader), p. 14.

<sup>78</sup> Renwick's *Sermons*, p. 162.

<sup>79</sup> *Ib.*, p. 223.

<sup>80</sup> *Ib.*, p. 242.

<sup>81</sup> *Earnest Contendings*, p. 193.

<sup>82</sup> *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 514.

<sup>83</sup> *Ib.*, p. 535. Renwick used nearly the same metaphor.—Renwick's *Sermons*. pp. 113. 179.

that there is a God to deliver out of their hands.”<sup>84</sup> And just because of this faith in eternal justice the chief leaders were able to foretell in a measure the course which events were likely to take, and thus some of them became in the popular imagination endowed with prophetic powers. Blackadder, for instance, was able to predict with absolute certainty that the captivity of the Kirk would be turned back again. “We cannot tell you, nor no man, when that shall be ; for the times and the seasons are not for us to know but are in His hand” ;<sup>85</sup> indeed, God is in no way answerable to man. “When thou wearies to wait, consider that thou art a bit of nothing, a dependent bit of being, to be made or not made, formed or marred at His pleasure.”<sup>86</sup> And it was equally safe to predict, as Peden<sup>87</sup> and Renwick<sup>88</sup> did, great tribulation for the country before the captivity was turned. But when Peden “the prophet” began to outline the detailed course of future events prediction was not so happy.<sup>89</sup>

The current eschatology was the natural corollary to the doctrine of the holiness of God. In one of two sermons on the judgment seat of Christ, Welch laid down this “one point of doctrine,” that there shall be a day of judgment appointed wherein every one, man or woman, shall receive a reward or punishment suitable to the measure of their work or offences. And among the “good reasons” why there will be such a day is the fact of injustice upon earth. “Therefore there must be a day of judgment, when all evil sentences, all acts of parliament, all condemnators, all

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<sup>84</sup> Sermon in *Memoirs* (2nd edition), p. 361. Cf. also King in *Faithful Contendings*, pp. 37-38, and Renwick's letter of 6th September 1682, in *Life and Letters*, p. 13, also p. 55.

<sup>85</sup> *Memoirs* (1st edition), p. 353.

<sup>86</sup> Hutcheson, *Forty-five Sermons on the CXXX. Psalm*, p. 244.

<sup>87</sup> *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 557.

<sup>88</sup> Letter to Mrs Jean Hamilton in *Life and Letters*, p. 133.

<sup>89</sup> Thus Peden's prophecy of a terrible catastrophe—"Britain and Ireland, overthrown with judgment and drenched in blood," remained unfulfilled (*Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 561), as also did Cameron's prediction "that the rod of the Lord's anger would be the French and other foreigners."—*Six Saints of the Covenant*, I., p. 228.

persons and causes whatsoever shall come to a hearing again.”<sup>90</sup> There will be indeed in many cases a complete inversion of values in the world to come. Nothing escapes God’s notice, said M’Ward; the case of the poor man who has lost by theft “the least brat of old cloths” is marked by God, “and marked on purpose that He may in place thereof clothe you with rich and glorious robes. . . . In that day your rags will be taken away and you will appear illustrious princes indeed.” And the weeping of the little children “for want of food, their pale faces, partly with fear, partly with famine,” will not go unpunished. It “shall certainly fill up the cup of these Amorites.”<sup>91</sup>

(iii.) The fact—inevitable from the nature of the period—that the holiness of God bulked more largely than His love in the sermons and literature of the period—has sometimes given rise to the inference that the Divine love was overlooked altogether by the Covenanters. Such is far from the truth. Indeed, Wedderburn of Kilmarnock declared love to be the fundamental attribute. “God is love, not only loving, but love itself.”<sup>92</sup> William Guthrie characterised the Divine love as “without a crack or flaw in it.”<sup>93</sup> Livingstone challenged the angels to “tell the weight and measure of the Divine love.” “Take the stars of heaven to be your counters and all drops that are in the sea, the pickles of sand that are on the shore, and the piles of grass that are in the earth. Sit down and sum the count of His love. No, no, give it over, give it over, it cannot be summed.”<sup>94</sup> The Divine love far surpasses all created love.<sup>95</sup>

Even Cargill, whose cast of mind was more or less austere, laid stress on the love of God. God’s love, he maintained, shows itself in its acts or outgoings, firstly, in tender sympathy; secondly, in His presence; thirdly,

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<sup>90</sup> Appendix to *Faithful Contendings*, p. 47.

<sup>91</sup> *Poor Man’s Cup of Cold Water*, M’Ward’s Tracts, pp. 164-165.

<sup>92</sup> *The Believer’s Privileges*, p. 35.

<sup>93</sup> *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 116.

<sup>94</sup> Letter to a friend, in *Select Biographies*, I., p. 272.

<sup>95</sup> *Memoir of Pringle of Greenknowe*, *ib.*, p. 425.

in redemption ; and fourthly, in bearing and carrying His people. It is a love that goes with men through all their afflictions ; but the consciousness of it is conditional on man himself. "The more you delight in God, the more He will delight in you." <sup>96</sup> Peden, in the course of a sombre sermon, declared that behind the wrath in God's face was the love in His heart.<sup>97</sup> John King, while preaching the anger of God, declared that love lay behind the wrath,<sup>98</sup> and even in the grim sermon on judgment Welch did not leave the Divine mercy out of sight ; he merely stated that there was a time-limit to mercy and grace.<sup>99</sup> "Sovereign love," said Blackadder, "the love that God bare to sinners," was the impelling cause of the Atonement. "Love must be at them, and therefore travailed a soul's travail to have the beloved saved." <sup>100</sup> It is in the letters of Renwick, however, that the most joyous insistence on the love of God is to be found. He wrote to a Dutch correspondent of that "infinite and transcendent love, in the profound depth of the admiration whereof angels are drowned." <sup>1</sup> "God," he wrote in 1683, "cannot change His love, nothing can extinguish it." <sup>2</sup> "However you may be surrounded with the world's malice and hatred, His love is still about you, and always next unto you." <sup>3</sup>

The doctrine of the eternal decrees of God, with its corollaries, election and reprobation, and a limited atonement, seems difficult to reconcile with the Divine love, and equally difficult with Divine grace. For it appears to make God the author of sin. One of the consequences of the Arminian controversy was the sharpening of the Calvinistic doctrine, and it is not surprising that in the

<sup>96</sup> Sermon printed for the first time in Carslaw's *Life of Cargill, Heroes of the Covenant*, p. 35.

<sup>97</sup> *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 559.

<sup>98</sup> Appendix to *Faithful Contendings*, p. 45.

<sup>99</sup> *Ib.*, p. 55.

<sup>100</sup> *Ib.*, p. 83.

<sup>1</sup> *Life and Letters*, p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, p. 46.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*, p. 227.

peculiar conditions of Scotland a high type of Calvinism became prevalent in the earlier Covenanting period. Rutherford, the greatest theologian of his day, was a supralapsarian, and pronounced sin to be necessary for the manifestation of the Divine justice and mercy.<sup>4</sup> But, as Dr James Walker pointed out, there was a gradual descent from this extreme position, and in the later Covenanting period the modification was in progress.<sup>5</sup>

There was not, of course, the faintest sign of sympathy with Arminianism. "The Arminian opinion," said M'Ward, "doth proudly impunge the sovereignty of God,"<sup>6</sup> and with Arminianism went what he described as "the errors of universal redemption."<sup>7</sup> Fraser alone among the writers and preachers of the time seems to have had a glimmering of the fact that there was an element of truth in Arminianism and in the idea of universal atonement. While denying that he was an Arminian, he maintained, in a certain sense, a common redemption. In his *Treatise on Justifying Faith*, written while in prison on the Bass, Fraser outlined the view that Christ had purchased "common benefits," the ordinary temporal blessings of life, and that owing to His grace the world is sustained and its material blessings enjoyed by all.<sup>8</sup> Further, he stated that "Christ did by His one infinite indivisible satisfaction and ransom satisfy divine justice for the sins of all mankind, though with different intention and ends according to the different objects thereof"—the intention being to save the elect but not the non-elect.<sup>9</sup> The opposition aroused by this divergence from the current doctrine of the Atonement

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<sup>4</sup> Walker, *Theology and Theologians of Scotland*, pp. 75-76. Principal Strang, Glasgow, Blackadder's uncle, was the most noted sublapsarian of his time. "It perhaps indicates the prevalence of very high doctrine that Strang had to give up his chair."—Walker, *ib.*, p. 81.

<sup>5</sup> *Ib.*, p. 75.

<sup>6</sup> *The True Nonconformist*, p. 347.

<sup>7</sup> *Ib.*, p. 367.

<sup>8</sup> Walker, *Theology and Theologians of Scotland*, p. 50.

<sup>9</sup> *Treatise on Justifying Faith*, p. 222.

indicates that the dogma of a limited atonement was held, theoretically at least, without question.<sup>10</sup>

There is, however, a difference between the complete system of thought to which a man may adhere theoretically in a philosophical sense, and the practical aspects of truth of which he makes use in everyday life. And an examination of the literature of the period shows that on the whole the Covenanting preachers were loyal to the recommendation of the Westminster Confession, that "the doctrine of this high mystery of predestination be handled with special prudence and care."<sup>11</sup> There can be no doubt that Dr Walker was justified in his opinion that "we are not to suppose that the holders of these views had any idea of making God the author of sin."<sup>12</sup> Such an idea was indignantly repudiated.<sup>13</sup> Shields laid down that the evil of the times existed only by the "permission and providential will" of God.<sup>14</sup> All evil, said Guthrie, is by the Divine permission. "God lets men fall."<sup>15</sup> And the doctrine of reprobation, although it occasionally makes its appearance in sermons, is not usually presented as an arbitrary, inexplicable fact.<sup>16</sup> Judgment and punishment are emphasised often with striking effect, but generally as a consequence of sin. In Michael Bruce's phrase, "Our Master will say to many, 'I never knew you,' because of your disorderly walking."<sup>17</sup> And Welch, in his arresting sermon on the judgment seat of Christ,

<sup>10</sup> John Carstairs, father of the Principal, advised Fraser to destroy his book (Wodrow MSS., Vol. LIX., folio 60.—Quoted by Anderson, *The Bass Rock*, p. 144). It is of course only fair to say that even in theoretical discussion of the question it was held that the elect, for whom the atonement was efficacious, might be a very large number.

<sup>11</sup> *Westminster Confession*, Chapter III., Section 8.

<sup>12</sup> *Theology and Theologians of Scotland*, p. 79.

<sup>13</sup> Shields, *A Hind Let Loose*, p. 231; *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 596.

<sup>14</sup> *A Hind Let Loose*, p. 232; *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 596.

<sup>15</sup> *Ib.*, p. 208.

<sup>16</sup> There are, of course, exceptions to this general rule, as when Renwick referred to the "miserable souls whom the Lord hath no other service for but to set them as a spectacle of His indignation."—Renwick's *Sermons*, p. 79; Guthrie, *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 208; and Welch, *ib.*, p. 653.

<sup>17</sup> *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 317.

distinctly states that damnation is the consequence of sin. It will be terrible, he says, "to hear the shrieks and cries of the damned; terrible to hear the cries of kings, princes, earls, lords, lairds, captains, rich and poor, high and low; to hear millions and millions of millions crying to hills and mountains to fall on them and cover them from the face of the Lamb; for yonder He is coming whom we despised, and His blood we had in our offer for washing away of sin; but we despised and trampled it under foot. What terror will it be to those who judged and persecuted Him in His members on earth, nay, to see Him whom they thus rejected and slighted to be their Judge."<sup>18</sup> And in another sermon Welch implicitly assumed the offer of salvation to all, making no reference whatever to arbitrary reprobation or a limited atonement.<sup>19</sup> Blackadder, in a sermon preached at East Kilbride, and also apparently at the historic conventicle at East Nisbet in the Merse, made a special appeal to the sinners "yet out of Christ," who are slaves unto their lusts; and he went out of his way to refute the argument that such are beyond salvation.<sup>20</sup> Cargill, preaching on John viii. 36, emphasised the "open proclamation in the Gospel." Christ, he said, is ready to accept of "all that come."<sup>21</sup> It was by Guthrie, however, that the note of universal opportunity was sounded most clearly. "Christ's market of His free offer is yet to be had for the salvation of any poor sinner who will have it."<sup>22</sup> Peace and salvation, he declared, are offered to the people in universal terms. "If any man will, he shall be welcome."<sup>23</sup> "God excludes none, if they do not exclude themselves."<sup>24</sup> God "would much rather have folk to be converted and live than die and perish."<sup>25</sup> Renwick, at the close of

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<sup>18</sup> Appendix to *Faithful Contendings*, pp. 51, 53.

<sup>19</sup> *Ib.*, pp. 60-71.

<sup>20</sup> *Ib.*, p. 87.

<sup>21</sup> *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 489.

<sup>22</sup> *Ib.*, p. 182.

<sup>23</sup> *Christian's Great Interest*, p. 97.

<sup>24</sup> *Ib.*, p. 98.

<sup>25</sup> *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 170.

the period, emphasised the universality of the gospel appeal as strongly as did Guthrie at the beginning. In the course of his first sermon in the fields, he appealed to all to hear the invitation. "Then come away, there is no more wanting save come. . . . If you except not yourself, He will not except you. His invitation is unto all: 'Everyone, come; he that thirsteth, come; he that hath no money, come.'" "His invitation is to everyone."<sup>26</sup> "He is a free Saviour, for all who are here this night, young or old, men or women, may have Jesus Christ."<sup>27</sup> And the wrath of God is an abiding wrath only if the help of Christ is not accepted.<sup>28</sup>

II. It is a common charge against orthodox Calvinism that it reduced Christ to a mere *deus ex machina* in the scheme of salvation, a means to an end; and so far as the authors of the Westminster Confession are concerned, there would appear to be some ground for this charge.<sup>29</sup> That undue emphasis was laid in the creeds on the theological Christ is admitted on all hands at the present day. The consequence was that the earthly life of Jesus, and His function as a prophet and teacher, were lost sight of; the humanity became merged in the divinity. And in the Covenanting literature of the period there is no trace of any deviation from orthodoxy on this question any more than on others. As Howie of Lochgoin remarked in his original preface to the collection of Covenanting sermons—"The divinity and two distinct natures of Christ in one person; the special and particular extent of His purchase, the infinite virtue of His merit, death, and sufferings, are held forth and exhibited" in the preaching of the time.<sup>30</sup> Socinianism was as repellent as Arminian-

<sup>26</sup> Renwick's *Sermons*, p. 21.

<sup>27</sup> *Ib.*, p. 112.

<sup>28</sup> *Ib.*, p. 436. Dr King Hewison gives it as his opinion that the Covenanters believed that the Atonement "was meant for all and must be preached to all."—(*The Covenanters*, II., p. 549.) This is certainly true so far as the message of the preachers was concerned.

<sup>29</sup> *Westminster Confession*, Chapter VIII. The theologians of the day in great degree missed the significance of Christ's earthly life as an example to his followers.

<sup>30</sup> *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 55.

ism. Christ was the second person of the Trinity, "God equal with himself,"<sup>31</sup> God equal with the Father—the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. The Divine Christ, it is true, is not generally spoken of as God. Indeed, there is singularly little confusion of the persons of the Godhead. Christ appears to have been only occasionally the object of prayer. "The work of creation is not attributed to Him as His personal property."<sup>32</sup> Nevertheless, the Divine Christ was viewed as infinite in knowledge.<sup>33</sup> His human nature, in Livingstone's phrase, "is a transparent lantern of glass where through we may see His godhead."<sup>34</sup> But there was one factor in Scottish religious life which acted as a check on this tendency in Protestant scholasticism to dehumanise Christ. "The Scottish struggle concerning the Headship," as an acute theologian of last century pointed out, "brought the personal Christ into very exceeding prominence."<sup>35</sup> For the battle for the Headship had two important consequences; it concentrated attention on the spiritual presence of Christ in the world, and on His earthly life and example.

James Guthrie, one of the earliest martyrs, spoke of Christ as "my light and my life, my righteousness, my strength, and my salvation, and all my desire"<sup>36</sup>—words implying a mystical relation to an ever-present Person. To M'Ward, this spiritual presence was very real. Christ, he said, had neither house, people, nor property in Scotland.<sup>37</sup> The rulers had crucified Him again.<sup>38</sup> But yet He was active throughout the land. It was Christ who had stirred up His "zealous ambassadors" to embark on field preaching;<sup>39</sup> it was Christ who made noble and

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<sup>31</sup> Cameron, *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. <sup>375</sup>~~303~~; Stevenson, *Comforting Cordial, Select Biographies*, II., p. 466.

<sup>32</sup> Renwick's *Sermons*, p. 129.

<sup>33</sup> M'Ward, *Earnest Contendings*, p. 132.

<sup>34</sup> *Select Biographies*, I., p. 280.

<sup>35</sup> Walker, *Theology and Theologians of Scotland*, p. 177.

<sup>36</sup> Wodrow, I., p. 195.

<sup>37</sup> M'Ward, *Poor Man's Cup of Cold Water*, Tracts, p. 123

<sup>38</sup> *Ib.*, p. 126.

<sup>39</sup> *Ib.*, p. 125.

notable inroads on Satan's dominions.<sup>40</sup> And this ever-present Christ suffered in and with His people. Peden regarded the persecution as "the filling up of Christ's sufferings in Scotland according to the ancient decree of heaven."<sup>41</sup> Margaret Wilson, the girl martyr, when asked what she thought of her fellow-sufferer, as the waters of the Solway were overflowing her, replied: "What do I see but Christ—in one of His members—wrestling there? Think you that we are the sufferers? No, it is Christ in us, for He sends none a warfare on their own charges."<sup>42</sup> Renwick spoke of Christ as a near friend—a powerful, willing, kind, and constant friend.<sup>43</sup> "It was said of a heathen, Socrates," he wrote: "All that knew him loved him, and they that did not love him, it was because they did not know him. Indeed, they that love not Christ, it is because they know Him not. If He were known, what a great, gracious, powerful, loving, beautiful, and excellent one He is, the heart would be filled with love unto Him."<sup>44</sup> With this great strong friend, Michael Bruce urged the necessity of "union and communion,"<sup>45</sup> and Welwood spoke of Him as one with whom daily communion could be held, whose absence is "such a bitter thing" that no earthly thing "can comfort folk."<sup>46</sup>

But this communion with Christ was no mere rhapsodical feeling. The mystical Christ was understood by the historical Christ. Livingstone urged one of his correspondents to "eat up and digest the precious history of His life and death contained in the Evangelists till it turn (if I may so say) into flesh and blood to you."<sup>47</sup> To Renwick, Christ is "the declarer of the Father's will,"<sup>48</sup>

<sup>40</sup> M'Ward, *Poor Man's Cup of Cold Water*, Tracts, p. 136.

<sup>41</sup> *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 567.

<sup>42</sup> Wodrow, IV., p. 249.

<sup>43</sup> Renwick's *Sermons*, pp. 531-532.

<sup>44</sup> Letter to Society of Strangers at Leeuwarden, *Life and Letters*, p. 91.

<sup>45</sup> *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 289.

<sup>46</sup> *Ib.*, p. 352.—>

<sup>47</sup> *Select Biographies*, I., p. 269.

<sup>48</sup> Renwick's *Sermons*, p. 91.

and the "faithful interpreter."<sup>49</sup> "The Lord Jesus Christ," to Cameron, "is the object of the believer's love."<sup>50</sup> "And because of all Christ did for me, should not His followers desire conformity with Him?"<sup>51</sup> Wedderburn urged "constant intercourse with Christ is the fountain of sanctification."<sup>52</sup> He drew, it is true, a distinction between the imitable and the inimitable actions of Christ. Counselling his hearers to "propose the perfect pattern of Christ's life" before themselves, he said: "It is true that all the actions of Christ are not imitable; He was not a mere man, but God and man, and what He did as God or as mediator between God and man we cannot imitate." But Wedderburn, having made this reservation, concentrated on the "divine things wherein the Scriptures expressly propose Him as an example, as love, meekness, self-denial, patience, making it His work to do good."<sup>53</sup> Blackadder urged the imitation of Christ in calling his hearers to "witness for Him," "adhere unto His truths closely and follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth."<sup>54</sup> Renwick is still more explicit in his assertion that "they that are righteous are those who have fled unto Christ and they indeed live righteously. Yet to make it more clear we shall in short tell you who they are who live righteously. These, viz., in a word 'who walk as He walked.'"<sup>55</sup> In a letter from the United Societies to "some friends in Emden," written by Michael Shields, Christ was defined as "love and the pattern of it," and from His commandment to love one another is deduced the urgency of mutual love.<sup>56</sup> Sir Robert Hamilton, in a letter to the Societies from exile in Holland, gave as a reason for the smallness of Christ's flock that "boasting in somewhat without and besides

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<sup>49</sup> Renwick's *Sermons*, p. 117.

<sup>50</sup> *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 395.

<sup>51</sup> *Ib.*, p. 398.

<sup>52</sup> *Believer's Privileges*, p. 20.

<sup>53</sup> *Ib.*, p. 170.

<sup>54</sup> Appendix to *Faithful Contendings*, p. 104.

<sup>55</sup> Renwick's *Sermons*, p. 31.

<sup>56</sup> *Faithful Contendings*, p. 256.

Christ has cost us dear," and he urged that neither persons nor parties should be followed unless "we see them following and imitating Him who was holy, harmless, undefiled." <sup>57</sup>

While the doctrine of Scripture prevented consistency on every occasion, Christ was very generally looked upon as the supreme historical example to whom appeal was usually made. The holding of conventicles was justified by an appeal to the gospel; Christ and His apostles were "the greatest of conventicle preachers" who recognised no supreme magistrate and required no indulgence.<sup>58</sup> Christ had called Herod "that fox," and the disregard for authority as such which the phrase implied did not pass unnoticed.<sup>59</sup> Christ's forgiveness of His enemies was deliberately imitated by many of the martyrs,<sup>60</sup> and the afflictions of the persecuted were allayed by the knowledge that the Lord and Master "drank of the same cup," <sup>61</sup> "waded through deeper waters and ran through hotter fires." <sup>62</sup> Thus the Headship of Christ was no mere ecclesiastical watchword, but was a principle to which on the whole the Covenanters studied to be loyal; <sup>63</sup> fidelity to that principle was the test of discipleship, and was decisive as to the eternal destiny of the individual.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>57</sup> *Faithful Contendings*, p. 219.

<sup>58</sup> Brown, *History of the Indulgence*, p. 154.

<sup>59</sup> Cameron, *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 413.

<sup>60</sup> See Chapter VII.

<sup>61</sup> M'Ward, *Poor Man's Cup of Cold Water*, Tracts, p. 122.

<sup>62</sup> Michael Shields, letter to Gordon of Earlston, *Faithful Contendings*, p. 169.

<sup>63</sup> The Headship of Christ over Scripture was not, of course, theoretically admitted.

<sup>64</sup> The "Second Coming" of Christ was generally identified with the Day of Judgment (Welch, Sermon in *Faithful Contendings*, p. 50; Livingstone, Letter in *Select Biographies*, I., p. 239). Peden and Renwick, in speaking of the "Lord's return to Scotland," appear to have meant simply retribution on the persecutors (*Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 562; Renwick's *Sermons*, pp. 57-59). A more spiritual view was outlined by Kid (Appendix to *Faithful Contendings*, p. 31).

## CHAPTER V

### POPULAR BELIEFS AND SUPERSTITIONS

FROM the dominant religious ideas of the period, which have been discussed at some length, the chief strength of the Covenanting movement was derived. Side by side with these, however, there existed other ideas which can hardly be designated as religious. Protestantism had taken over from Romanism the belief in a vague, shadowy realm of portents and wonders, devils and demons and witches, and in a vast invisible world of evil. Very possibly Romanism had inherited these from the pre-Christian paganism of Scotland; the Catholic Church had taken over some superstitions and had waged intermittent war against others.<sup>1</sup> But at all events these beliefs and superstitions bulked largely in the imagination of the people. In respect to wonders, prodigies, and portents, the leaders as well as the rank and file were prone to trace God's wrath in material happenings and to look for signs and wonders. The age was an unscientific one. It is true that modern science had been born, and that in the University of Cambridge, Isaac Newton occupied a professorial chair. But even in England and on the Continent the scientific conception of law was unfamiliar except in a small select circle.

If this was true of Europe in general, it was emphatically so of Scotland. The Scottish theologians were not indifferent, it is true, to the witness of Nature to God, but concerning things in themselves, the most rudimentary

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<sup>1</sup> MacKinnon, *Culture in Early Scotland*, p. 45 ff

ideas were entertained.<sup>2</sup> That the old geocentric system of the world reigned virtually unchallenged is evident from Fleming's discussion of the heavens and the Earth in his great work on Scripture.<sup>3</sup> Belief in miracle, too, was widespread. The chief thinkers and preachers, it is true, laid little stress on it,<sup>4</sup> and Hutcheson inclined to a naturalistic interpretation of texts which might be taken to allude to miraculous occurrences. Nevertheless, even the most enlightened of the Covenanting leaders were prone to lay stress on what was unusual and remarkable, and to seek for supernatural explanation. Thus M'Ward interpreted the Great Fire of London in 1666 as a Divine judgment on that city for the burning of the Covenants.<sup>5</sup> He also drew attention to the tremendous judgments of God, "whereby some that have been active in these cursed courses have been hurried out of the world," and to the "anguish and agonies under which others of them have died."<sup>6</sup>

(i.) One consequence of the non-existence of natural science was the supernatural interpretation of unusual phenomena. Thus, of the great comet of 1680, Law wrote: "No history ever made mention of the like comet, and it is doubted if ever the like was seen since the creation," and he added that "it is certainly prodigious of great alterations and of great judgments on these lands and nations for our sins, for never was the Lord more provoked by a people than by us in these lands, and that by persons of all ranks."<sup>7</sup> Patrick Walker, who referred to the comet as "that blazing star," records that when M'Ward, "who was then a-dying, heard of it, he desired Mr Shields and other friends to carry him out that he might see it; when he saw it, he blessed the Lord that he was now about

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<sup>2</sup> Wedderburn, for instance, believed the stars to shine by reflected sunlight.—*Believer's Privileges*, p. 27. It is only fair to say that he speaks of the sea ebbing and flowing "with the course of the moon."—*Ib.*, p. 167.

<sup>3</sup> *Fulfilling of the Scripture*, pp. 297-298.

<sup>4</sup> Blackadder, *Memoirs*, 2nd edition, p. 239.

<sup>5</sup> *Poor Man's Cup of Cold Water*, Tracts, p. 148.

<sup>6</sup> *Ib.*, p. 185.

<sup>7</sup> *Memorials*, p. 170.

to close his eyes, and that he was not to see the woeful days that were coming upon Britain and Ireland, and especially upon sinful Scotland.”<sup>8</sup> Law was seriously perturbed at the possibilities for evil in the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in 1682.<sup>9</sup> One influential thinker, however, held much more enlightened views on these matters. To subject to the influence of the stars, said Hutcheson, “these things which depend upon contingent causes and the will of man, so as to make predictions from them concerning such events and effects, is a mere folly founded upon so many fond suppositions which have no being in nature but are only the chimeras of the astrologer’s own brain.”<sup>10</sup> And he reiterated his belief that God “commands all the stars in their motion and influences, and not fate or they themselves.” But on the whole, such a clear and sane view was rare.

(ii.) Not only were natural phenomena misunderstood and misinterpreted. The age was one of great credulity, and the most remarkable stories, which may have had a substratum of truth in some simple but misapprehended fact, came to be believed. Thus Kirkton records “wonderful prodigies in the air” at the time of the battle of Rullion Green. Several persons at Pittenweem vouched that “they heard the voice of a multitude, as they judged, about Wilstoun Mount, praising and singing psalms.”<sup>11</sup> Before the same battle two merchants of Haddington saw an apparition of four men and a dead body, and “their dog was so feared that he durst not go forward, but came running back among the horses’ feet.”<sup>12</sup> Kirkton relates also that a fire was seen to rise frequently from a morass near Carnwath, and cover the house of a man who was alleged to have murdered some

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<sup>8</sup> *Six Saints of the Covenant*, I., p. 36. Walker collected many instances of judgments on particular persons for outrageous deeds.

<sup>9</sup> *Memorials*, p. 236.

<sup>10</sup> *Exposition of the Book of Job* (on Chapter XXXVIII., pp. 31-35), 2nd part, p. 22.

<sup>11</sup> Kirkton, *History*, p. 250.

<sup>12</sup> *Satan’s Invisible World Discovered*, p. 187.

of the Pentland rebels and buried them in the morass.<sup>13</sup> Thus "there was the sight both by night and day of brae-sides covered with the appearance of men and women, with tents, and voices heard in them."<sup>14</sup> Walker speaks of "showers of swords and bonnets" falling in a spot of ground "without Glasgow" in 1678, and he soberly recorded that "in the year 1686 many yet alive can witness that about the Crosfoord boat, two miles beneath Lanark, especially at the Mains on the Water of Clyde, many people gathered together for several afternoons, where there were showers of bonnets, hats, guns, and swords, which covered the trees and ground, companies of men in arms marching in order upon the water-side, companies meeting companies, going all through other, and then all falling to the ground and disappearing, and other companies immediately appearing the same."<sup>15</sup> He added that two of the people who were present saw this vision, and a third "saw not," but that he himself, who was present at the place on three separate afternoons, could see nothing. Similar visions were seen in Glasgow and vicinity in 1684 and 1685. On 6th May of the latter year "a vision was seen of foot and horse on Glasgow Green, between nine and eleven at night, and the horses in great companies on both sides running away with great speed, but all with empty saddles. A little after Huntly came and lay with his men on that same green."<sup>16</sup> Of a conventicle held by Welwood on the Lomond Hills, which was attacked by the military, "it was affirmed by

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<sup>13</sup> *History*, p. 244.

<sup>14</sup> *Six Saints of the Covenant*, I., p. 33-35. The scholarly Fleming laid particular stress on these "prodigious signs," pointing out that sometimes "they have been shaped out to point at the very nature of the stroke then imminent, such as a flaming sword in the air . . . also showers of blood, the noise of drums, and such like, which are usually known to go before wars and commotions."—*Fulfilling of the Scripture*, p. 259.

<sup>15</sup> *Six Saints of the Covenant*, p. 37. See also *Faithful Contendings Displayed*, p. 253.

<sup>16</sup> Laing MSS. (vol. 344, No. 125), Edin. Univ. Lib., quoted by Dr Hay Fleming, *Six Saints of the Covenant*, p. 127.

some women who stayed at home that they clearly perceived like the form of a tall man of majestic stature stand in the air, in stately position, with one leg, as it were, advanced before the other, standing above the people all the while of the soldiers shooting. . . . The women knew not of the soldiers' onset at the time until the people came home." Four "honest men" forwarded to Blackadder an account of this, vouching for the truth of this vision.<sup>17</sup> Patrick Walker records that Blackadder, who seems to have been more or less sceptical of such statements, examined the "most solid Christians" in the district of Rutherglen concerning the reality of atmospheric visions and miraculous voices, alleged to have been seen and heard; and he states that "Mr Blackadder concluded it was of the Lord," and that after investigation he accepted the evidence as trustworthy.<sup>18</sup>

Many of these visions were regarded as glimpses into the future, and some of the more prominent leaders were credited with extraordinary powers of second sight. Indeed, Peden is chiefly remembered as "the prophet," the word being used to designate the possession of supernatural gifts. This kind of prophecy must be carefully distinguished from the affirmations made by Blackadder, Cameron, and others as to the ultimate triumph of the Covenanting cause and the final overthrow of the persecutors. These affirmations were confidently made as deductions from the doctrine of the righteousness of God and His activity in the world. Nor is it in a line even with the unfulfilled predictions of Cameron or Welch or Peden himself regarding the transformation of Britain into a field of blood and the coming of dire disaster through French invasion.<sup>19</sup> But Peden was credited with the gift of prophecy of a different kind—a sort of uncanny second sight. Thus he was said to know of the defeat at Rullion Green before news had reached

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<sup>17</sup> *Memoirs*, 1st edition, p. 185.

<sup>18</sup> *Six Saints of the Covenant*, I., p. 34-35.

<sup>19</sup> *Ib.*, p. 228; also pp. 92-93.

the house in Carrick which he was occupying ; <sup>20</sup> he foresaw the melancholy death of the young girl who scoffed at him while in prison on the Bass.<sup>21</sup> He likewise foresaw the sad fate of the prisoners who took the bond after Bothwell.<sup>22</sup> He predicted a tragic end for John Brown the carrier when performing his marriage,<sup>23</sup> and again on the morning of the murder.<sup>24</sup> These are only a few of a large number of instances where Peden was credited with the gift of second sight and the power of foreseeing future events <sup>25</sup>—not merely great world movements, but events in themselves only of local or family importance. Making allowance for a certain substratum of truth, for a brooding, sombre element in his character, and for certain gifts of an obscure kind, it is obvious that many of these stories of Peden reflect the current world view of the time.

Not only was the world believed to be full of things strange and weird, not only were the fortunes of the future read in the signs of heaven, not only were visions and prodigies believed in implicitly; but throughout the period under discussion there was a firm belief in the existence of an invisible spirit world. Spirits both good and evil were supposed to roam everywhere; ghosts of the dead and dying appeared to the friends. "Fairies danced around the 'wirrikow'; little men in green inhabited the knolls, and virile spirits lurked in wells and streams." <sup>26</sup> Over and above this, there was firm and widespread belief in an invisible world of evil spirits, in which the chief place was assigned to the devil or Satan. The Covenant-

<sup>20</sup> *Six Saints of the Covenant*, I., p. 48.

<sup>21</sup> *Ib.*, p. 49.

<sup>22</sup> *Ib.*, p. 53.

<sup>23</sup> *Ib.*, p. 61.

<sup>24</sup> *Ib.*, p. 84.

<sup>25</sup> Ker of Kersland recorded that when a party of Cameronians were on the way to join Argyll, Peden said: "We have no occasion to go any further, for the Earl is this minute fallen a victim to the fury of his enemies." "Whereupon several gentlemen pulled out their watches to mark the time, which was afterward found to answer to a very minute accordingly."—*Memoirs of Ker of Kersland*, I., p. 8.

<sup>26</sup> Hewison, *The Covenanters*, II., p. 111.

ing leaders had the most sublime faith in a Divine Power All-Holy and Omnipotent, and yet they found room in their world concept for belief in a mighty Prince of Darkness, subject to God, certainly,<sup>27</sup> whose power for evil was yet very great, and who was ultimately the power behind all the persecutions, bloodshed, and outrages of the time. Cameron stated that "the devil was the first destroyer. He was the first and chief destroyer. Sin came from him. He is the great Abaddon and Appolyon." At the same time he added his opinion that "though there were no devil, yet there is that in the heart of man that would destroy him."<sup>28</sup> In Brown's view, it is Satan who thinks it "for his advantage to add affliction to the afflicted, and to use his utmost endeavour to break them with one sad exercise."<sup>29</sup> M'Ward spoke of the dark places in the land as "Satan's territories,"<sup>30</sup> and he warned his correspondents that the devil studies revenge when he is defeated. "Be sure, therefore, he will endeavour to be avenged upon you; he will make war upon you, and manage it with all the force and fury he can, yea, with all the fraud and hellish stratagems. . . . He hath great wrath against a poor feeble company these many years."<sup>31</sup> In the last analysis, therefore, the persecution was the work of Satan; yet M'Ward could not grant such great powers to the Prince of Darkness. "Satan hath got leave to open the very sluice of hell and drown Britain with such a deluge of profanity."<sup>32</sup> The persecutors and their subordinates were the devil's vassals. Sharp, indeed, was looked on as his special ally, and the humming-bee, which was reputed to have flown out of his snuff-box which his murderers opened, was supposed to be a proof of this.<sup>33</sup> Graham of Claverhouse was

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<sup>27</sup> Hutcheson, *Exposition of the Book of Job*, p. 43.

<sup>28</sup> *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 408.

<sup>29</sup> *Apologetical Relation*, p. 1.

<sup>30</sup> *Poor Man's Cup of Cold Water*, Tracts, p. 126.

<sup>31</sup> *Ib.*, pp. 168-169.

<sup>32</sup> *Ib.*, p. 186.

<sup>33</sup> Kirkton, *History*, p. 421.

thought to be, as the devil's special protégé, proof against steel and lead.<sup>34</sup> To pay the cess to such a government was to sacrifice to the devil.<sup>35</sup> To accept of the Indulgences was to walk into his net; they were his special opportunity. "For the devil hath the knack to make himself to be entertained and received as an angel of light when he knocks at an honest man's door."<sup>36</sup> And this powerful potentate had many emissaries in the evil spirits under his command. Cameron reminded his audience that while the Lord Himself and His angels beheld the meeting, still the "devils of hell, many of them, no doubt, are here this day. And he is a strange man and she a strange woman who finds not these devils at present suggesting some wicked notion to divert them from hearing or stealing away the Word that it may not profit you."<sup>37</sup> Brodie of Brodie, the devout north country laird, who hovered on the verge of the Covenanting party, said of the devil, "He knows what we are about, but we know not what he is about, or when or how he works. All that we do or are is obvious to him, but nothing that he does is obvious to us nor to the poor wretches that he deludes."<sup>38</sup> Peden is recorded by Walker to have observed that "it is very hard living in this world, incarnate devils above the earth and devils beneath the earth."<sup>39</sup>

It is well to remember that this belief in the ubiquity of the devils and his angels was by no means confined to the Covenanting party; it was the fixed opinion of all classes of the community. Indeed, it was a professor in Glasgow University, who conformed to Episcopacy and the Supremacy, who enunciated a complete theory of the

<sup>34</sup> Sir Walter Scott, *Tales of a Grandfather*, p. 554.

<sup>35</sup> *Against the Cess*, Tracts, p. 240.

<sup>36</sup> M'Ward, *Earnest Contendings*, pp. 89, 356.

<sup>37</sup> *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 388.

<sup>38</sup> *Diary of Alex. Brodie* (Spalding Club), p. 261. By the "poor wretches" Brodie evidently meant the witches.

<sup>39</sup> *Six Saints of the Covenant*, I., p. 79. Cf. Hutcheson, *Exposition of the Book of Job*, p. 9. Fleming, *Fulfilling of the Scripture*, pp. 259, 262.

existence and activity of the devil and his angels.<sup>40</sup> Although normally invisible, evil spirits were believed to have been seen from time to time. Peden is reputed to have had a scuffle with the devil in a cave in Galloway,<sup>41</sup> and to have beheld the devil in the form of a raven at a Quaker's meeting in Ireland.<sup>42</sup> John Semple of Carsphairn assured his hearers that Satan was so envious of the good work to be done at a Sacrament season that he would contrive a storm of wind and rain; and a man in black seen in the waters was reputed to be the devil.<sup>43</sup> Even when not visible, the devil was thought to be audible. A chronicler of the period related how once he heard Satan from behind a hedge, groan like an aged man, and shortly afterwards roar like a bull.<sup>44</sup> One of the devil's principal functions was the convening of the witches' meetings.<sup>45</sup> The belief in witchcraft was the natural corollary to that in a powerful prince of evil, and was universally accepted by both Protestants and Roman Catholics. The Covenanters have been blamed for the persecution of witches in the seventeenth century, but whatever blame attaches to them must be shared by Roman Catholics and Episcopalians as well. During the persecution, the Covenanting leaders were quite blameless in this connection, for the simple reason that they had no influence whatever over the governments of the day, which nevertheless found time to carry on a vigorous campaign against the witches.<sup>46</sup>

The whole subject of witchcraft has been involved in much obscurity, but there can be little doubt of the truth of Lecky's remark that while some of the elements of pre-Christian paganism became amalgamated with Romanism, another element "became a kind of excrescence upon

<sup>40</sup> George Sinclair, *Satan's Invisible World Discovered*.

<sup>41</sup> *Six Saints of the Covenant*, I., p. 79.

<sup>42</sup> *Ib.*, I., p. 129.

<sup>43</sup> *Ib.*, I., p. 195.

<sup>44</sup> Stevenson, *Comforting Cordial, Select Biographies*. II., p. 445.

<sup>45</sup> Law, *Memorials*, pp. 121-145.

<sup>46</sup> Wodrow, I., p. 244.

recognised Christianity," and "hovering upon the verge of the faith," entered into the system of witchcraft.<sup>47</sup> This view has been recently developed and elaborated in a recent work by Miss M. A. Murray on the witch cult in Western Europe. Miss Murray's contention is that witchcraft was simply a survival of ancient paganism—a religion of devil worship, accompanied by child sacrifice and immoral rites.<sup>48</sup> The witches, male and female, were pledged to the service of Satan, and instead of being the innocent victims of a bloodthirsty clerical oligarchy, were in many cases men and women of depraved life and conduct. If this theory be correct, even in its main outlines, the attitude of intolerance which the Covenanters, and the Christian Church in general, displayed towards witches and witchcraft may be, if not excused, at least explained. A firm belief in the devil and in his extensive power for evil entailed a fear and dread of those who had professedly sold themselves into his service. And the Biblical admonitions against witchcraft and magic and the specific Mosaic command to put witches to death<sup>49</sup> had great potency in sharpening the Covenanting attitude of antagonism to what were believed to be diabolical activities.

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<sup>47</sup> *History of Rationalism in Europe*, I., pp. 36-37.

<sup>48</sup> *The Witch Cult in Western Europe*, pp. 156-159 ; 173 ff.

<sup>49</sup> Exodus xxii. 18.

## CHAPTER VI

### PERSONAL RELIGION

IN his examination of the Scottish intellect during the seventeenth century, Buckle maintained and elaborately defended the contention that in the eyes of the Scottish clergy of that period, "the Deity was not a beneficent being, but a cruel and remorseless tyrant."<sup>1</sup> To excite fear was, he maintained, "the paramount object" of the preaching of the time.<sup>2</sup> "Little comfort, indeed, could men gain from their religion. Not only the devil as the author of all evil, but even He whom we recognise as the author of all good, was, in the eyes of the Scotch clergy, a cruel and vindictive being, moved with anger like themselves. They looked into their own hearts and there they found the picture of their God. According to them, he was a God of terror instead of a God of love."<sup>3</sup> In the light of an unbiased examination of sermons, diaries, memoirs, tracts, and journals, it is obvious that this estimate of the doctrine of God as held by the Covenanters is so prejudiced, so jaundiced, and obviously the result of so perfunctory a study of the contemporary documents as to be utterly worthless. It is worse than a half-truth; as a description of the actual working beliefs of the teachers and thinkers of the time, it is little better than a caricature.

What then of the conclusion which Buckle deduced from his premises?—"Under the influence of this horrible creed, and from the unbounded sway exercised by the clergy who advocated it, the Scotch mind was thrown

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<sup>1</sup> *History of Civilisation in England*, III., p. 239.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, p. 238.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*, pp. 244-245.

into such a state that during the seventeenth, and part of the eighteenth centuries, some of the noblest feelings of which our nature is capable, the feelings of hope, of love, and of gratitude were set aside, and were replaced by the dictates of a servile and ignominious fear.”<sup>4</sup> Careful investigation shows this deduction to be as untrustworthy as the premise on which it is based.

I. In a sermon preached at Irvine, where he exercised his ministry under the Act of Indulgence, Hutcheson was at pains to point out that there must be no misunderstanding of the phrase, “the fear of God,” which he defined as “the apprehension of the Divine Majesty, goodness, and greatness.”<sup>5</sup> It certainly must not be understood, he said, so that “folk should make a bogle of God.”<sup>6</sup> Nor was the “fear of hell,” of which so much has been made by critics of the Covenanters, so large a factor in their religious life as has been alleged. To be “out of the state of nature,” said Wedderburn, “means complete immunity from the fear of hell,”<sup>7</sup> and M’Ward sarcastically informed the “red shanks,” or mercenary soldiers, that they no more feared hell than he did.<sup>8</sup>

That earnest Christians were greatly exercised over their state of soul is, of course, indisputable. Sin was a very real menace and peril, and the belief in a personal devil and in unseen powers of darkness,<sup>9</sup> and in an eternal place of punishment, the abode of the devil and the lost, rendered the sense of sin more awful. In addition, the times were dark and stormy; life was, to earnest men, hard and grim. The outward conditions, the hazards

<sup>4</sup> *History of Civilisation in England*, III., p. 247. R. L. Stevenson, whose sympathies were wholly with the Covenanters, also went surprisingly wide of the mark in his assertion that “those who took to the hills for conscience sake in Scotland had all gloomy and bedevilled thoughts: for once that they received God’s comfort, they would be twice engaged with Satan.”—Quoted by Smellie, *Men of the Covenant*, p. 281.

<sup>5</sup> *Forty-five Sermons on the CXXX. Psalm*, p. 201.

<sup>6</sup> *Ib.*, p. 203.

<sup>7</sup> *David’s Testament Opened Up*, p. 33.

<sup>8</sup> *Poor Man’s Cup of Cold Water*, Tracts, p. 15.

<sup>9</sup> *Vide* Chapter V.

and dangers of the time, in themselves testified to the power of evil. It is not surprising, therefore, that there is much evidence in the preaching and writing of the time of what Fraser of Brea aptly called "soul trouble."<sup>10</sup> As has been well said, it was the practical belief of the Covenanters "that the heart is depraved, and that the devil, the world, and the flesh are ever active in their hostility to the new man created in Christ Jesus. . . . They were much given to introspection and self-questioning, and analysis of frames and feelings."<sup>11</sup>

A concrete instance of this is to be found in the experience of Fraser of Brea, who left a lengthy account of his inner life. He recorded how these feelings came and went, how his religious life had "many interruptions and winters, going backward and forward; like the filling sea, some waves gained ground and some succeeding lost and abated, but a new overflowing regained all again. There would come a wave of the Spirit that would overflow largely, but after that a little ebb; and then when I little expected, there would come a wave that would set me as far forward as ever again: and then a little decay and then a recovery, so as for a long time I was tossed up and down like a locust, wearied of myself and of my life, and righteousness and enlargements of heart and of all these glories."<sup>12</sup> Thomas Hog of Kiltarn likewise passed through deep waters before he found peace of soul. "Crowds of sins" were charged upon him until he was in despair, and his whole experience was "as a terrible whirlpool." But at length he was rewarded with "faith's view of Christ."<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup> *Select Biographies*, II., p. 220.

<sup>11</sup> Mackenzie, *The Covenanters in Moray and Ross* (Nairn, 1875), p. 184. Cf. Memoir of Mr Thomas Hog in *Memoirs of Veitch, Hog*, etc., pp. 74-76. Experience of a pious woman to be found in Memoirs of Mrs Goodall, *Select Biographies*, pp. 481-493 (Vol. II.).

<sup>12</sup> *Select Biographies*, II., pp. 134-135. Cf. Stevenson, *Comforting Cordial*, in same volume.

<sup>13</sup> *Memoirs of Veitch, Hog*, etc., pp. 74-75. The current belief in the devil and his activities was a large factor in producing this soul trouble. Cf. The experiences of Stevenson of Dailly, *Comforting Cordial*, *Select*

II. While this introspective element entered into the life of the soul, it was not the dominant element. The current religious conceptions—the view of God, the sense of the presence of Christ, and above all the doctrine of predestination—made, on the whole, for joy and peace, and these in turn developed a remarkable spirit of selflessness. (i.) This sense of joy and peace is manifest in the whole literature of the period. In his classic of Christian experience, *The Christian's Great Interest*, Guthrie spoke of a communication of the spirit of God which is “sometimes let out to some of His people”—“a glorious divine manifestation of God unto the soul, shedding abroad God’s love in the heart”—“a thing better felt than spoken of”—“a flash of glory filling the soul with God.” “Oh, how glorious,” he proceeds, in a strain akin to mysticism, “is the manifestation of the Spirit! Faith here riseth to so full an assurance that it resolves wholly into sensible presence of God,” and from this altitude of serenity, Guthrie proceeds to demonstrate how peace comes, and with peace, joy—“an unspeakable and glorious joy in the soul, in the apprehension of God’s friendship and nearness.”<sup>14</sup>

Guthrie’s experience was by no means unique; rather, it was typical of the religious life of the time. Livingstone, believing that “when the mind is full of light, the heart is full of love and the conscience full of peace,”<sup>15</sup> blessed the Divine name for his great peace of mind.<sup>16</sup> His fellow exile, M’Ward, wrote of “that blessed second sight, whereby a saint in the darkest hour of distress sees that which is soul supporting.” “Oh, the invisible God,” he exclaimed, “made visible to the poor persecuted creature, in His omnipotent power, His infinite love, and His unfailing faithfulness, makes all visible dangers

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*Biographies*, II., pp. 417, 422, 425, 426, 428; Mrs Goodall, *ib.*, p. 484; and *Life of Alexander Reid, A Scottish Covenanter*, p. 23. He said: “I cannot express the soul anguish I was in,” p. 21.

<sup>14</sup> *The Christian's Great Interest*, pp. 80-81 and 83.

<sup>15</sup> *Select Biographies*, I., p. 280.

<sup>16</sup> *ib.*, p. 226.

evanish into an invisibility.”<sup>17</sup> The prisoners on the Bass were equally at peace in their own souls. In his letter from prison, dated 11th August 1677, Peden, while envying the birds their freedom, confidently affirmed his belief in the Divine righteousness, and thanked the Lord for “the most common mercies.”<sup>18</sup> A more remarkable instance of joy and peace in the midst of suffering is to be found in the journal of John M’Gilligen, outed minister of Fodderty, written in the same “base and unwholesome” prison. Entries in October and November 1683 record M’Gilligen’s “gladness of heart.” On the 19th October, the top of the Bass was to him “a Peniel where the Lord’s face in some measure was seen”; and in November he recorded the sweet “outpouring of the Spirit.”<sup>19</sup> Dickson’s experience was similar. In a letter from the Bass, he referred to the “floods of tenderness” he had met with—“a shining light breaking in upon my heart brighter than the Sun at the noontide of the day.”<sup>20</sup> Fraser of Brea in the same “melancholy place” while acknowledging that “prisons must be prisons,” spoke of the Divine goodness to him, and recorded “some special visits from God; some further discoveries of the knowledge of Christ and the gospel I never had before.”<sup>21</sup>

Nor were the Cameronians, despite their sternness, less happy in their inner lives. Cargill, in one of his sternest sermons, pointed out how, in time of trouble, the kindness of God is always felt.<sup>22</sup> In expounding Isaiah xxvi. 20-21, he said—“There are chambers of safety provided for God’s people and children in a time of wrath and indignation.” . . . “Safety, pleasure, and delight are to be found in them. Oh, happy soul that

<sup>17</sup> *Poor Man’s Cup of Cold Water*, Tracts, p. 111.

<sup>18</sup> Letter is given in Johnston’s *Peden, the Prophet of the Covenant*, pp. 96-98. At a later date, when himself at liberty, he reminded the prisoners in Dunnottar that “every day brings new mercies to the people of God.”—*Ib.*, p. 216.

<sup>19</sup> Wodrow, III., p. 436, where extracts from M’Gilligen’s diary are given.

<sup>20</sup> *The Bass Rock*, p. 345.

<sup>21</sup> *Select Biographies*, II., pp. 343-346.

<sup>22</sup> *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 537.

shall be delighted with them ! ” And to the question as to what is signified by the word “ chambers,” he replied, “ It is the soul committing itself unto God in His providence ; the providence of God shall provide chambers for you.” <sup>23</sup> The greatest joy on earth, Cameron maintained, is the joy of the believer.<sup>24</sup> But perhaps the most joyous type of religious experience is recorded in the writings of Renwick. Confident in the Divine justice,<sup>25</sup> he trusted to the Spirit of God to bear up his soul in all its difficulties.<sup>26</sup> Even in presence of death, tranquil joy was still the keynote of his life. “ Since I came to prison,” he asserted in his testimony, “ the Lord hath been wonderfully kind. He hath made His word to give me light, life, joy, courage, yea, it hath dropped the sweet-smelling myrrh unto me. . . . I have found sensibly much of His Divine strength, much of the joy of His spirit and much assurance from His word and spirit concerning my salvation.” <sup>27</sup>

Not only in the lives of the leaders, but in the lives of the more obscure followers of the Covenanting cause, the same note was predominant. Pringle of Greenknowe, amid much harassment, rested under the shadow of the loving-kindness of God.<sup>28</sup> George Brysson,<sup>29</sup> an Edinburgh merchant, testified to the sweetness of his Christian experience. And the great conventicles, which were attended by thousands, and at which conversions were numerous, were distinguished above all by the deep sense of the Divine presence felt by the worshippers. At one of the most famous of these “ there was a spiritual and divine majesty shining on the work and sensible evidence that the great Master of Assemblies was present in the midst.” <sup>30</sup> “ There was a rich and plentiful effusion of

<sup>23</sup> *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, pp. 537-538.

<sup>24</sup> *Ib.*, p. 392.

<sup>25</sup> “ The cause is the Lord’s : He will overturn thrones and kingdoms.” — *Life and Letters*, p. 93.

<sup>26</sup> *Ib.*, p. 36.

<sup>27</sup> *Ib.*, p. 93.

<sup>28</sup> *Select Biographies*, Vol. I., p. 423.

<sup>29</sup> *Memoirs of Veitch and Brysson* (ed. by M’Crie), p. 270.

<sup>30</sup> Blackadder, *Memoirs* (1st edition), p. 203.

the Spirit shed abroad on many hearts. Their souls, filled with heavenly transports, seemed to breathe in a diviner element, and to burn upwards as with the fire of a pure and holy devotion.”<sup>31</sup>

This sense of tranquil joy was no mere transient feeling. The dying testimonies, not only of the prominent martyrs, but also of the more obscure and humble, indicate that they died cheerfully. A glad note of quiet cheerfulness was evinced by the martyrs executed for complicity in the Pentland rising,<sup>32</sup> of whom the most prominent was Hugh M’Kail, whose last testimony has become a classic.<sup>33</sup> James Learmonth, executed for his presence at the Whitekirk skirmish in 1678, died with a “willing heart and cheerful mind,” having found the gracious presence and love of Christ manifested to his soul.<sup>34</sup> The experience of the Cameronian martyrs was similar. James Skene, executed as a hearer of Cargill in November 1680, dated thus his letter of farewell to his brother, an Aberdeenshire laird—“From my Lord Jesus’ house, which He has made a sweet palace, wherein He shows me His wonderful free love, the close prison above the iron-house in the Tolbooth of Edinburgh, November 1680.”<sup>35</sup> And in the testimonies of many other martyrs, men and women alike, the same sense of the Divine presence, and peace of soul, is the dominant note.<sup>36</sup>

(ii.) This tranquillity of mind—born of the confidence in God’s power and mercy, and the sense of election to

<sup>31</sup> Blackadder, *Memoirs* (1st edition), pp. 204-205.

<sup>32</sup> Testimonies of Alexander Robertson (p. 100), John Nelson of Corsack (p. 103), John Wodrow (p. 115), and Ralph Shields, an Englishman who had thrown in his lot with the persecuted party (p. 119), in *Testimonies of the Scots Worthies* (combining *Naphtali* and the *Cloud of Witnesses*).

<sup>33</sup> M’Kail’s Speech from the Scaffold, Wodrow, II., p. 59.

<sup>34</sup> *Testimonies of the Scots Worthies*, pp. 185-186.

<sup>35</sup> *Ib.*, p. 79.

<sup>36</sup> See Testimonies of Archibald Stewart (p. 291), Isabel Alison (p. 308), Marion Harvie (pp. 311-315), in *Testimonies of the Scots Worthies*. The testimonies of James Boig and John Dick, students of theology, are given in Wodrow, III., p. 285, and IV., p. 58. Boig admitted that the assaults of Satan had been “many and strong,” but declared that he was being carried above the fear of death by the Divine power.

eternal life—was potent in producing a spirit of selflessness which enabled not only the leaders of the movement, but humble and illiterate men and women to bear torture and to face death. It was no sour asceticism which made these men and women indifferent to death; nor was it a selfish desire to escape from persecution and torture. It was the conviction that God had elected them not only to everlasting life, but to His service. The cause of His kingdom was well worth suffering and dying for; to suffer and to die was to co-operate with God, whose cause was greater than man's individual happiness. "Courage yet for all that is come and gone," Renwick wrote from Rotterdam in 1683, "the loss of men is not the loss of the cause. What is the matter though we should all fall? I assure all men that the cause shall not fall."<sup>37</sup> Michael Shields wrote in similar strain during the hottest period of the persecution: "If God be glorified and His name exalted, what lose we?"<sup>38</sup> "If God shall make our names, our enjoyments and our all, stepping-stones for Him, whereupon to walk for the advancement of His name and interest in the earth, we desire to be heartily content."<sup>39</sup> Life was but a loan from God to man, as an obscure countryman finely said,<sup>40</sup> and in the assurance that it was lent with a purpose, men and women could die—as the Bo'ness servant girl claimed to die—as willingly as they had lived.<sup>41</sup>

A study of the personal religion of the times proves conclusively that in place of being gloomy and morbid, it was in the main joyful and comforting. Indeed, what impressed an outsider—the Dutch clergyman, Brakel of Leeuwarden—was neither the gloom nor the misery, but the "heavenly abounding blessings, the great abundance

<sup>37</sup> *Life and Letters of James Renwick*, p. 61.

<sup>38</sup> *Faithful Contendings*, p. 126.

<sup>39</sup> *Ib.*, p. 181.

<sup>40</sup> John Gilry's Testimony, quoted by Stewart, *Covenanters of Teviotdale*, p. 195.

<sup>41</sup> Marion Harvie's Testimony, *Testimonies of the Scots Worthies*, pp. 311-315. John Nisbet of Hardhill longed to "seal the precious cause" with his blood.—*Select Biographies*, II., p. 408.

of the spirit and spiritual joy," and "the cheerful martyrdom for the name of Jesus which God your Father has in a more abundant manner bestowed on you than any Church in the world in these times." <sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Brakel's letter to the "Fathers and Brethren under the Persecution," *Faithful Contendings*, p. 33.

## CHAPTER VII

### ETHICAL STANDARDS

HAVING considered the religious conceptions current during the period under discussion, and the effect of these conceptions on the inner lives not only of the leaders but of the rank and file of the persecuted party, there remains to be ascertained the nature of the ethical ideals current among them. For the religion of the Covenanters did not consist in mere intellectual acceptance of the dogmatic statements of their formulated theology. Nor was it only a concern of the inner life ; for the Covenanters were not mystics or quietists who retired within themselves from the turmoil and confusion of the world. Their religious conceptions and experience had a potent influence over their life and conduct. They were the dominating forces in shaping their ethical ideals and fixing their moral standards. Were these ideals and standards worthy ? According to the reactionary historians of Cavalier and Royalist sympathies, they were not. Hypocrisy, fanaticism, and uncharitableness, issuing in turbulent and murderous principles have been charged against them. Obviously the only court of appeal is the literature of the period —the sermons, testimonies, journals, letters, tracts, and memoirs which have been preserved. In these we are able to trace the ethical ideals of the time, and to discover the stress which the various preachers, writers, and martyrs laid upon conduct as the issue of religious belief.

I. (i.) As pointed out in a previous section, the holiness of God bulks more largely in the religious thought of the time than the Divine love. It is not surprising, therefore, that in the covenanting ethics the greatest stress was laid on holiness. Personal holiness is indeed, in the thought

of the time, the direct fruit of religion ; the possession of holiness is the test of the sincerity of religious profession. On this there is quite remarkable unanimity. Wedderburn speaks of the "absolute necessity of the practice of holiness as a thing wherein Papists, Socinians, Arminians, Lutherans, Antinomians, and Anabaptists, all unite."<sup>1</sup> Livingstone's message from exile to his parishioners of Ancrum is first and foremost a call to holiness. To the large number who "have never laid religion to heart," he points out the folly of sin. Do not evil courses, he asks, "waste the body, take away the judgment, and leave a sting in the conscience?"<sup>2</sup> On the "little handful" in his parish who had "laboured to keep their garments clean," he urged, along with steadfastness and devotion to principle, first and foremost, holiness. "It is not enough to be steadfast in the present controversy ; ye must study to be holy in all manner of conversation, and shine as lights, blameless and harmless, the sons of God, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation. . . . Let the love and fear of God be made evident to all onlookers, in all your carriage, so shall ye go near to convince even adversaries of the reality of your religion."<sup>3</sup> In another letter, less formal in style, he counsels a friend to beware of what he calls "predominants"—devils that no amount of prayer or fasting will eradicate. "Alas ! that it should be truly said—He is a good man, but he is very greedy ; he is a Christian man, but exceeding proud."<sup>4</sup> By Guthrie, the necessity of holiness is urged with even greater emphasis. In "all who do warrantably pretend to Christ," there must be a new creature. "This new creature is called 'the new man,' which doth hold out the extent of it. It is not simply a new tongue, or new hand, but a 'new man.' " There must be a complete renovation—a principle of new life and motion which is "the new heart," and flowing from this "acts of life"—conformity to the Divine image ; and when this complete

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<sup>1</sup> *Believer's Privileges*, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> *Select Biographies*, I., p. 237.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*, I., p. 243.

<sup>4</sup> *Ib.*, p. 269.

change is wrought in a man, he sees God in the world around him and seeks to live a holy life.<sup>5</sup> The Scriptural promises of life and peace are made to faith *followed by holiness*.<sup>6</sup> Holiness is indeed "the fruit of true faith"; without it no man shall see God.<sup>7</sup> Not only in his survey of the religious life in *The Christian's Great Interest*, but in his sermons also Guthrie unweariedly sounded this note. There is certainly not a trace of antinomianism about his gospel; it is ethical through and through. "Faith moves only," he says, "when folk are diligent in duty"—"working righteousness and walking uprightly with God."<sup>8</sup> And the following of Christ, which is the duty of man because of the great sacrifice of Christ, must be a faithful following. Religion must fill the whole of life. Men must cleave to Christ "through good and bad report, through affliction and persecution."<sup>9</sup> He speaks scathingly of those who are religious by turns—who seek the Kingdom of God "before or at communions, when they hear of damnation and salvation";<sup>10</sup> and no less sarcastically of those who "will pray half an hour in their families and then drink till it be day again."<sup>11</sup> And so he counsels his hearers to take religion seriously, to be "earnest with the spirit of God,"<sup>12</sup> and he emphasises the "duty of self-examination";<sup>13</sup> for even the smallest sin—an evil thought or a wrong word spoken—will work havoc to the soul.<sup>14</sup>

No less ethical is Michael Bruce. Indeed, his conception of religion may be defined as a sort of ethical mysticism. In a sermon on Genesis xlii. 25, he puts some direct questions to his hearers. He asks, for instance, if sin has become more loathsome and ugly than the devil or hell. "Dost thou see no help for thee in heaven or in the earth, but in the Lord Jesus Christ?"<sup>15</sup> And while accepting without questioning the current theory of the Atonement, he is concerned about the ethical fruits of the acceptance

<sup>5</sup> *Christian's Great Interest*, pp. 52-53.    <sup>6</sup> *Ib.*, p. 85.    <sup>7</sup> *Ib.*, p. 99.

<sup>8</sup> *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 241.

<sup>9</sup> *Ib.*, p. 192.

<sup>10</sup> *Ib.*, p. 207.

<sup>11</sup> *Ib.*, p. 205.

<sup>12</sup> *Ib.*, p. 187.

<sup>13</sup> *Ib.*, p. 199.

<sup>14</sup> *Ib.*, p. 97.

<sup>15</sup> *Ib.*, p. 287.

of Christ. He asks if the soul's delight and longing desire is to have a well-grounded trust in Christ with union and communion with Him, and as a consequence "the new birth, new nature, and new creature."<sup>16</sup> But the test of the whole spiritual experience, with Bruce, is the ethical result of conversion. There must be a true and real principle of love and zeal for God and His glory, binding the soul "to the gospel-way of new obedience to the moral law of God";<sup>17</sup> and seriousness, activity, and diligence in the practical performance of every duty of religion.<sup>18</sup> For eventually the ethical fruits tell—the "orderly walk." Because of "disorderly walking," many shall lose eternal life.<sup>19</sup> And Welwood, likewise emphasizing the urgency of holiness, refutes the view that "heaven will be, so to speak, a cage of unclean creatures."<sup>20</sup> The authors of the *Apology for the Persecuted Ministers* stated emphatically that, "while rejoicing in Christ Jesus as mediator," yet we "constantly affirm good works of piety towards God, of equity and charity towards men, to be necessary." Regeneration was vital; but simply as the solid foundation of "good works."<sup>21</sup>

Nor were the more prominent of the field preachers, properly so-called, less emphatic in urging on the people the necessity for holiness. To Welch, holiness was of paramount importance. To serve God should be, in his view, a delight; but this service must permeate all life. There must be "holiness in all manner of life and conversation"; "be holy in your eating and drinking, your discourse, your buying, selling, and in all your conversation."<sup>22</sup> All idols and "beloved sins" must be sacrificed as a proof of the believer's love of God;<sup>23</sup> on the day of judgment all manner of unholiness will be made manifest, and for secret unholiness as well as

<sup>16</sup> *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 289.

<sup>17</sup> *Ib.*, p. 290.

<sup>18</sup> *Ib.*, p. 291.

<sup>19</sup> *Ib.*, p. 317.

<sup>20</sup> *Ib.*, p. 360.

<sup>21</sup> Introduction to *Apology for Persecuted Ministers*, p. 12.

<sup>22</sup> Appendix to *Faithful Contendings*, p. 66.

<sup>23</sup> Sacramental Discourse, *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 648.

palpable, men will be judged.<sup>24</sup> To Peden, holiness, or at least the will for holiness, was indispensable. "Ye may want many things, but ye may not want holiness." "Friends, ye may be blind, lame, dumb, and contemptible in the world and want many things, and yet come to heaven; but if ye want holiness, ye shall never come there."<sup>25</sup> Of Blackadder it has been said that he "never lost sight of the advice of the venerable Mr Archibald of Dunscore, who, introducing him to his people at Troqueer, exhorted him to make the Christian atonement the prominent theme in his preaching."<sup>26</sup> That he acted on this advice is suggested by the prominence of the doctrine of the Atonement in three sermons of his, which have been preserved. But the aim of the Gospel message, he told a conventicle at East Kilbride in 1678, is "to have some ungodly sinner made godly, and some enemy reconciled unto God."<sup>27</sup> He exhorted the people to study thankfulness to God in all their ways, and to take the Bible along with them, "for every piece of your walk, and in all your deportment as becomes the Gospel of Christ."<sup>28</sup> And to him, the ultimate proof of the Divine blessing on the work of the outed ministers was to be found just in the fact that wild and desperate men had been enlightened in mind and reformed in life.<sup>29</sup>

Nor were the more revolutionary party less insistent on the need for holiness and likeness to Christ. The exiled M'Ward was impressed by the fact that "there is so little of real Christianity to be found among Christians"; and the reason of this, he concluded, is that men do not consider, *i.e.*, realise, that "Christianity is the soul cast in that blessed mould of disconformity to the world and conformity to Christ." All the special duties of religion, he concluded, are but "the promoting of that begun con-

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<sup>24</sup> Appendix to *Faithful Contendings*, p. 49.

<sup>25</sup> *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 557.

<sup>26</sup> Johnston, *Treasury of the Scottish Covenant*, p. 355.

<sup>27</sup> Appendix to *Faithful Contendings*, p. 91.

<sup>28</sup> Blackadder, *Memoirs*, 1st edition, p. 364.

<sup>29</sup> Appendix to *Faithful Contendings*, p. 100.

formity to Jesus Christ till it be carried on and consummate in a perfect likeness to him.”<sup>30</sup> And in negative fashion, M’Ward specially noted as the signs of the absence of Christianity, worldliness, passion, pride, triviality of intent, love and hatred running in the wrong channels or seldom terminating upon the proper objects.<sup>31</sup> Brown laid down a regulative principle; all social loyalties, he maintained, must be brought to the test of Christ.<sup>32</sup>

“Purity,” said Cargill, “is better than safety; and it is heart purity that God requires.”<sup>33</sup> “Men must quit their sins.”<sup>34</sup> And Cargill laid stress not merely on sin in the abstract, but on the gross breaches of the moral law. When, at the historic conventicle at the Torwood, he excommunicated the civil and ecclesiastical rulers of Scotland, he did so not only for their tyranny, but for their uncleanness, drunkenness, swearing, and lying.<sup>35</sup> To Cameron, social righteousness was absolutely imperative. But while denouncing the rulers of the country, for their want of righteousness, he urged on his own followers the necessity of love to and conformity with Christ.<sup>36</sup> In the Lanark declaration, Renwick denounced the king for “his shameful vices.” “No other court in the world hath attained unto such a height of debauchery and depravedness.”<sup>37</sup> And as in the world, so in the individual life, holiness is the prime necessity. It is not enough, Renwick declared, “to babble over two or three words at night and morning.”<sup>38</sup> “Who are the people of God?” he asked; and his answer is a purely ethical one:

<sup>30</sup> *Poor Man’s Cup of Cold Water*, Tracts, pp. 109-110.

<sup>31</sup> *Ib.*, p. 139.

<sup>32</sup> *Banders Disbanded*, Tracts, p. 199.

<sup>33</sup> Sermon in Carlsaw’s *Life of Cargill*, pp. 70-74.

<sup>34</sup> *Ib.*, p. 56.

<sup>35</sup> The Excommunication, *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, pp. 498-501.

This attitude to the sins of the rulers was in advance on the earlier position. Even Sir James Stewart drew a distinction between “personal faults of governors” and “public miscarriages in point of government, and in exercising the powers wherewith they are invested.”—*Jus Populi*, p. 402.

<sup>36</sup> *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 398.

<sup>37</sup> The Lanark Declaration, Johnston’s *Treasury*, p. 146.

<sup>38</sup> Renwick’s *Sermons*, p. 25.

"They who are righteous and live righteously. Now these who are righteous are these who have fled unto Christ and they indeed live righteously." These are they "who walk as He walked. They live righteously, beginning all things with God, referring all things to God." And this loyalty and obedience to God must be constant, "not by fits and starts."<sup>39</sup>

In Renwick's correspondence, there is outlined a sound philosophy of Christian ethics. Every rational creature, he maintains, sets one thing or other before its eyes as "its main and chief good"<sup>40</sup>; and according to the man's disposition, so is the main end. But the evil of the world arises from the fact that "it is but few who bend towards the true chief good, which is God Himself." So he bids his correspondent look at God as He is, "as the Being of beings," and then as He is revealed in Christ "in His condescendency, love, power, faithfulness, and other properties." And when we do comprehend God, and especially God as revealed in the Person of Christ, He will be the chief end. "Let us see Him and observe, and say, 'What have we to do any more with our idols?'"<sup>41</sup> Those who embrace Christ are the "rich and happy." "Woe unto them that think they have no need of Christ," and to "them that would have Christ and their own something beside, for they have neither loved nor conceived rightly of Him. Woe unto them that make excuse for their not following of Him; for they know not their folly." But acceptance of Christ must be acceptance of the whole Christ. "Woe unto them that would divide Him and not take Him in all His offices"—prophet, priest, and king—"for they have not learned Him."<sup>42</sup> In one of his last sermons he drove this home more pointedly. Christ, he reiterated, cannot be divided.

<sup>39</sup> Renwick's *Sermons*, p. 331.

<sup>40</sup> "Labour to know and find out wherein a man's chief happiness doth consist. . . . Fix the heart in the belief of this, that the enjoyment of God in Christ is our happiness."—Fraser, *Select Biographies*, II., p. 272

<sup>41</sup> *Life and Letters*, pp. 161-164.

<sup>42</sup> *Ib.*, p. 173.

Many would accept Him "as a priest to save them from their sins, but they cannot endure to receive Him as a prophet to teach and lead them aright in His way and as a king to reign in and over them and to be subject to His laws." It is true that this "crosses their nature too much." But Christ must be accepted wholly or not at all.<sup>43</sup> Love to Christ must be an abiding love—"not a flash and away again."<sup>44</sup> Man must search into their souls, "searching to know what corruption is strongest and what grace is weakest,"<sup>45</sup> seeking to have the corruption weakened and the grace strengthened. Love to Christ must manifest itself in hatred of sin; and Renwick is not content with speaking of sin in the abstract. He points out the incongruity of cursing and swearing with the profession of religion;<sup>46</sup> and he specifically emphasises the urgency of having done with drunkenness and uncleanness, and "cheating and supplanting your neighbour."<sup>47</sup> This emphasis on holiness was characteristic of the Cameronian party throughout. In a letter to the soldiers of Lord Angus's regiment, dated from Douglas, Lanarkshire, 27th March 1690, Michael Shields reminded the Society men who had enlisted in the regiment of the great need for holiness. The "sin, snare, and danger of sinful associations" are held up as objects of fear, and the men are exhorted to remember their character "as a people more strict, zealous, and religious" than others. "Let your light shine before men and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness." The soldiers are specially urged to resist the peculiar temptations of military life—sinful and scandalous games, as cards and dice, duels and fighting, quarrelling—"either among

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<sup>43</sup> Renwick's *Sermons*, p. 562.

<sup>44</sup> *Ib.*, p. 459.

<sup>45</sup> *Ib.*, p. 209. This emphasis on holiness was by no means confined to the leaders. Nisbet of Hardhill urged his children to "study holiness" in all their ways (*Select Biographies*, II., p. 407). John Stevenson, the Ayrshire land labourer, gave as his last advice to "study perfect holiness."—*Ib.*, p. 476.

<sup>46</sup> Renwick's *Sermons*, p. 331.

<sup>47</sup> *Ib.*, p. 477.

yourselves or with others"; and above all, drunkenness, which "often occasions these unmanly and un-Christian actions," is pointed out as a sin to be avoided.<sup>48</sup>

(ii.) Renwick laid great stress on the danger of "going along with the known corruptions of the times."<sup>49</sup> There is no excuse for disloyalty to God because of the disloyalty of others; it is "juggling with God" to condone such as an "epidemical fault."<sup>50</sup> This question of the responsibility of the individual for compliance in corporate sin bulked very largely in the minds of the people, especially during the latter period of the struggle. The leaders were particularly exercised over it. To Brown, covenant breaking was in itself a "dreadful sin,"<sup>51</sup> and "most dangerous."<sup>52</sup> It was the breaking of a solemn promise and a breach of the laws of truth. Though the whole land break the Covenant, but one family, said John Guthrie of Tarbolton, that family is bound to stand to it.<sup>53</sup> Acceptance of the Indulgences with all that the Indulgences implied was shown by Brown to be quite unjustifiable. The action of the indulged was essentially, in his view, anti-social, and their "metaphysical abstractions"—justifications of their action—neither Christian nor manly.<sup>54</sup> M'Ward strongly condemned the proposal for an understanding with the indulged on the ground of the ungodli-

<sup>48</sup> *Faithful Contendings*, p. 435. At an earlier date the general principle was that in the proposed regiment there should be severe punishment for unclean living and speech, cursing and swearing, drunkenness, etc. (*Ib.*, p. 400). "The holiness of life" of the Cameronian party specially impressed the sympathisers abroad.—(Brakel's Letter, 1682), (*Ib.*, p. 33).

<sup>49</sup> Renwick's *Sermons*, p. 477.

<sup>50</sup> *Life and Letters*, p. 229. Even an obscure person like Mrs Goodall was thus exercised. "I have sadly smarted in having a hand in the present guilt of the nation. I always was conscious of my weakness and insufficiency," she confessed, while acknowledging that, by God's providence, she had been kept from "public steps of defection."—*Select Biographies*, II., p. 486. Fraser traced this corporate sin to "men's desire to be neighbourly."—Sermon on *Prelacy an Idol*, p. 2.

<sup>51</sup> *Apologetical Relation*, p. 327.

<sup>52</sup> *Ib.*, p. 347.

<sup>53</sup> *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 673.

<sup>54</sup> *History of the Indulgence*, in *Faithful Witness-bearing Exemplified*, pp. 154-155.

ness of their action.<sup>55</sup> And Cameron was even more severe in his condemnation of them. "Let them be godly men or be what they will, in this case they have not love to Christ in exercise."<sup>56</sup> A similar standpoint is taken by Brown in the *Banders Disbanded*. It was not merely inexpedient or unwise to take the bond which the Government offered; it was sinful. "I cannot see how such a liberty can without sin be embraced or bargained for."<sup>57</sup> "That a sinful or iniquitous bond may be given with a good conscience, no conscientious man will affirm."<sup>58</sup> And the bond is not only sinful; it is scandalous, giving ground or occasion for stumbling to others, and anti-social in its effects.<sup>59</sup>

Still clearer was the issue raised by the imposition of the cess—a tax imposed for the express purpose of raising money to maintain a force to suppress conventicles. In one of the most cogent and convincing pieces of writing which has come down to us from the period, "A Testimony against paying the Cess to an Unjust and Unlawful Government of wicked Rulers," M'Ward showed that to yield obedience on the matter was sin. Payment of cess is "personal or public concurrence in waging and carrying on of this war against heaven."<sup>60</sup> To pay the cess is to assist the Government in the execution of their "hell-hatched and heaven-daring decrees, orders, and laws";<sup>61</sup> and the plea that it is payable by law is a "pitiful plea" which will not acquit before God the man who acquiesces in payment.<sup>62</sup> To do so is to choose sin in order to avoid suffering.<sup>63</sup> According to Renwick, the payment of fines is sin—against God Himself and His work, against the

<sup>55</sup> *Earnest Contendings*, p. 23. For this he was taken to task by the annalist Law, who had accepted the Indulgence, as a "hot-headed man, otherwise a man of parts and learning, who, having received misinformations of the state of our kirk here, kindled a great fire."—*Memorials*, p. 153.

<sup>56</sup> *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 402. M'Ward also spoke of their disloyalty to Christ.—*Earnest Contendings*, p. 28.

<sup>57</sup> *Banders Disbanded*, M'Ward's *Tracts*, p. 20.

<sup>58</sup> *Ib.*, p. 42.

<sup>61</sup> *Ib.*, p. 221.

<sup>59</sup> *Ib.*, p. 56 ff.

<sup>62</sup> *Ib.*, p. 238.

<sup>60</sup> *Tracts*, p. 221.

<sup>63</sup> *Ib.* p. 253.

godly—even against enemies, for it “hardens their hearts and strengthens their hands in their wickedness.”<sup>64</sup> One should be, said Shields, ready “to endure the worst this wicked world can make him suffer, ere he be found guilty in the matter of a compliance of that nature.”<sup>65</sup>

(iii.) It is noteworthy that, living as they did in an age of persecution, and emphasising as they did the necessity of holiness or loyalty to God, the later Covenanters avoided so successfully the peril of asceticism. It is true that there are traces to be found here and there of the spirit of other-worldliness. Such a spirit manifested itself when Fraser wrote of the world as “the great bar that hinders from Christ,”<sup>66</sup> and when Michael Bruce described it as “sinful vale of misery”;<sup>67</sup> when M’Ward expressed the view that one reason for the Divine permission of the persecution is that the sufferers may be hunted by the world’s hatred “home to heaven”;<sup>68</sup> and when Cargill yearned wistfully for departure from earth and the “sweet rest” for those who seek after Christ.<sup>69</sup> But in general, though heaven is very real and immortality indeed the only quality which is precious in the soul,<sup>70</sup> yet to the Covenanters the world is God’s world. Life on earth is worth while; recreation and amusement have their place. It is recorded of Guthrie that “he used the innocent recreations and exercises which then prevailed, fishing, fowling, and playing on the ice, which at the same time contributed to preserve a vigorous health,”<sup>71</sup> and that in the theory and practice of music he had “a more than ordinary dexterity.” Blackadder, too, was at pains by occasionally participating in the mirth of his parishioners at Troqueer “to teach them that cheerfulness is not

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<sup>64</sup> Renwick’s *Sermons*, p. 424.

<sup>65</sup> *A Hind Let Loose*, p. 497.

<sup>66</sup> *Memoirs, Select Biographies*, II., p. 210.

<sup>67</sup> *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 276.

<sup>68</sup> *Poor Man’s Cup of Cold Water*, Tracts, p. 120.

<sup>69</sup> *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 520. Cf. Kid’s Sermon in Appendix to *Faithful Contendings*, pp. 18-19.

<sup>70</sup> *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 485.

<sup>71</sup> Life of Guthrie, Dunlop, *Select Biographies*, II., p. 50.

incompatible with seriousness ; that piety has no necessary connection with an austere censorious temper.”<sup>72</sup> The general attitude was not that life be narrowed, or man’s activity circumscribed, but rather that holiness cover every part of life, including the “lawful use of every creature enjoyment and recreation.”<sup>73</sup> Blackadder<sup>74</sup> and Pringle of Greenknowe<sup>75</sup> betray in their writings their keen delight in the beauty of the natural world.

Writing of the “new creature,” Guthrie expressly pointed out the effect of conversion on recreation. The new creature “studies to make use of meat, drink, sleep, recreation, apparel, with an eye to God.”<sup>76</sup> Renwick, in one of his lectures, went out of his way to state that he had no opposition to tobacco, provided there is moderation in its use, and that there is no smoking at public worship.<sup>77</sup> None of the prominent leaders of the Covenanters laid the least stress on renunciation as an end in itself. It is only “weights,” said Wedderburn, which God calls on man to lay aside.<sup>78</sup> God, said Cargill, does not ask men to surrender anything that is lawful.<sup>79</sup> “I am allowing none,” said Michael Bruce, “to quit his means or lands either, unless he be called upon it.”<sup>80</sup> Nor is there any abstract virtue in self-sacrifice. Sir James Stewart brought to a focus the Covenanting attitude on this theme when he remarked that God never calls to suffering “when he giveth a fair way of preventing it.”<sup>81</sup> Certainly, the Covenanting emphasis on holiness and its fruits—sobriety, purity, temperance, and loyalty to the cause of Christ—was free from the element of asceticism which has, in so many cases, marred Roman Catholic piety and morality.

<sup>72</sup> *Memoirs*, 1st edition, p. 51.

<sup>73</sup> Michael Bruce, *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 294.

<sup>74</sup> *Memoirs*, 1st edition, p. 201.

<sup>75</sup> *Select Biographies*, I., p. 437.

<sup>76</sup> *Christian's Great Interest*, p. 57.

<sup>77</sup> Renwick's *Sermons*, p. 261.

<sup>78</sup> *Believer's Privileges*, p. 131.

<sup>79</sup> *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 516.

<sup>80</sup> *Ib.*, p. 318.

<sup>81</sup> *Jus Populi Vindicatum*, p. 277.

II. (i.) Just as the holiness of God bulked more prominently in the thought of the time than the Divine love, so the urgency of holiness is more emphatically insisted upon than the need for the spirit of love. Nevertheless, the latter is by no means overlooked in the literature of the time. Thus, Guthrie counselled his hearers to "lay aside all passion and rancour at men."<sup>82</sup> They must "be denied" to the injuries and wrongs received in the world, and he holds up Christ's petition, "Father, forgive them," and Stephen's dying prayer, as examples to be followed.<sup>83</sup> He commended also charity in judgment of others, characterising the spirit of jealousy as a "miserable evil."<sup>84</sup> And the authors of the *Apology for Persecuted Ministers* spoke of "meekness, sobriety, and judicious love, that speaks no evil without clear rational grounds," as "the great ornament of the professor of Christianity."<sup>85</sup> And this spirit was to be world-wide in its range. Among the subjects of prayer prescribed by Walter Smith in the rules for meetings which he drew up, were the reclamation of the Jews, the enlightenment of the "poor Pagan world, living in black perishing darkness without Christ and the knowledge of His name," the conversion of Mohammedans and heretics—"that the blind may no more lead the blind and go to hell wholesale, living and dying so."<sup>86</sup> Among the reasons given for the general fast among the Cameronians in June 1688 was the lack of "sympathy with the sufferings of other churches, as France, Hungary, and Piedmont."<sup>87</sup>

The Cameronians were indeed far from under-estimating the urgent necessity of love as a Christian virtue. It fell, indeed, to Renwick to lead and direct an intractable minority, embittered by persecution and well-nigh goaded into violence. It would have been only natural if he

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<sup>82</sup> *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 259.

<sup>83</sup> *Ib.*, p. 198.

<sup>84</sup> *Ib.*, p. 231.

<sup>85</sup> *Apology for Persecuted Ministers*, p. 55.

<sup>86</sup> *Six Saints of the Covenant*, II., p. 94.

<sup>87</sup> *Faithful Contendings*, p. 342.

had been carried even further than Cameron along the line of wrathful indignation and imprecation. His well-balanced mind, however, prevented that development. Throughout his leadership of the United Societies, Renwick's conception of God as a God of love first and foremost acted as a brake on the more stern and revengeful element in his Cameronian creed ; and in one of his most important letters, he urged his correspondents not to become infected with the "sourness of others," maintaining that zeal should be accompanied by meekness "that you may be free from passion and prejudice. Let meekness be extended towards all persons and zeal against all sins." <sup>88</sup> His conception of the truly ethical life as bound up in the acceptance of Christ in His three offices of prophet, priest, and king, led him to emphasise the necessity of dwelling not only in holiness but in love. "It is impossible for one child of God to hate another child of God." <sup>89</sup> The children of God ought to bear one another's burdens, and their love one to another should make them faithful to reprove and plead with one another in meekness and in love. Even in the stress and strain of the Revolution period, Michael Shields, in his letter to the Cameronians who had enlisted as soldiers in Lord Angus's regiment, advised them to "forbear and forgive one another. Be not of a revengeful, but of a gospel spirit." <sup>90</sup>

(ii.) The controversies concerning the successive Indulgences, the payment of cess and other public questions, occasioned much searching of heart and much plain speaking, and the controversialists of the period have been frequently charged not only with bigotry and intolerance, but also with lack of charity. But the attitude of the non-indulged—both moderates and extremists—towards those who had accepted the Indulgence, was, though stern and uncompromising, still different in

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<sup>88</sup> *Life and Letters*, p. 167.

<sup>89</sup> The word "child of blood" is ambiguous. It would seem, however, to exclude the persecutors.

<sup>90</sup> *Faithful Contendings*, p. 433.

kind from their attitude towards the Government. They were still "brothers in Christ," though they had disowned the Covenants and were guilty of disloyalty to Christ.<sup>91</sup> Brown of Wamphray, possibly the doughtiest opponent of the Indulgence, went out of his way to speak of his indulged brethren as "dear to his soul";<sup>92</sup> and he added, "I hope, though they should despise me and despitefully use me, shall be so." M'Ward, too, remarked that those who loved them dearly lamented the more over their defection,<sup>93</sup> and spoke of his own honour and esteem for them.<sup>94</sup>

Nevertheless, the position of the bulk of the non-indulged Presbyterians was admirably summed up by M'Ward in his discussion on love. Love to God must be "predominant and primary"; love to the brethren is "subordinate and secondary."<sup>95</sup> And love and fear of the Almighty makes it necessary to withstand the indulged brethren in their course. Love to God and His precious interests must come first.<sup>96</sup> M'Ward was far from minimising the difficult ethical problem thus raised. To see "brethren devour one another" is truly a sad sight.<sup>97</sup> He confessed himself heart-broken—his soul "filled with bitterness and anguish," to observe such contentions among those who formerly enjoyed sweet communion with one another;<sup>98</sup> and he was fully alive to the harmful effect of the "heat and hurry of debate" on the inner spiritual life.<sup>99</sup> Yet he was resolute in his attitude. The indulged ministers by their action had betrayed the cause; they were responsible, by their action in accepting the Indulgence, for the unhappy division.<sup>100</sup> And M'Ward saw no alternative to complete separation from them.<sup>1</sup> Love to the indulged must be expressed by sharp rebukes, and by taking such courses

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<sup>91</sup> M'Ward, *Earnest Contendings*, p. 223.

<sup>92</sup> *History of Indulgence* (Epistle to Christian Reader), p. 125.

<sup>93</sup> *Earnest Contendings*, p. 110.

<sup>94</sup> *Ib.*, p. 218.

<sup>95</sup> *Ib.*, p. 84.

<sup>96</sup> *Ib.*, p. 80.

<sup>97</sup> *Ib.*, p. 57.

<sup>98</sup> *Ib.*, p. 252.

<sup>99</sup> *Ib.*, p. 66.

<sup>100</sup> *Ib.*, pp. 126 and 173.

<sup>1</sup> *Ib.*, p. 299.

with them as to reclaim them from the error of their way.”<sup>2</sup> They must present themselves as mourners for what they have done ;<sup>3</sup> and apologies without repentance are of no avail.<sup>4</sup> Cameron stated frankly that he “ did not like ” those who were familiar with the “ stated and avowed ” enemies of Christ,<sup>5</sup> and he consistently preached separation from them. Even Blackadder, who represented the more moderate party, while counselling the avoidance of unnecessarily extreme positions,<sup>6</sup> explicitly declared that there must be repentance for compliance with Erastianism.<sup>7</sup>

After the Revolution this attitude was maintained by a considerable section of the Cameronian party, who refused to enter the Revolution Church, on the ground that so many of its ministers had been indulged or had complied with prelacy. Alexander Shields, however, saw clearly that the issues had changed, and that with the Revolution a new situation had arisen. There are, he said, grounds necessitating conscientious people to withdraw from some church communion at all times ; and there are other grounds “ which will only justify withdrawing at some time.”<sup>8</sup> He placed in the latter category the defections of the past. In his appeal to the Cameronians, he recalled their minds to the fact that “ it is the great command to love our neighbour as oneself,” and that “ endeavours for union and concord among the lovers of truth are duties absolutely necessary.”<sup>9</sup> “ If there were more love, there would be more union and communion notwithstanding of differences.” The supreme need, Shields pointed out, was reconciliation. “ And if this reconciliation cannot be obtained any other way, there must be mutual forgiveness ; not judiciary, to take away the guilt, that is God’s prerogative ; but charitative, which must be extended to many more offences and

<sup>2</sup> *Earnest Contendings*, p. 292.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*, p. 299.

<sup>4</sup> *Ib.*, p. 322.

<sup>5</sup> *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 402.

<sup>6</sup> *Memoirs*, 1st edition, p. 224.

<sup>7</sup> *Six Saints of the Covenant*, I., p. 208.

<sup>8</sup> *Enquiry into Church Communion*, p. 24.

<sup>9</sup> *Ib.*, p. 4.

trespasses than are confessed and acknowledged to us.”<sup>10</sup> After all, there is another duty as well as contending for truth—that is, seeking peace. “The want of peaceableness as well as the want of truth will make our salt to lose its savour.”<sup>11</sup> Peace must be pursued and followed, “even when it seems to flee away and difficult to be obtained.”<sup>12</sup>

(iii.) In his tract, entitled *The Poor Man's Cup of Cold Water*, M'Ward proposed a still more searching question than that of the attitude to be taken up towards the weaker brethren. “What should be our carriage,” he asked, “in regard to enemies?” The souls of enemies, he said, are precious, and he counselled prayer for them even “while they stretch forth their hands against you. Study ye this blessed revenge of good will: lift up your heart, with your hands unto God in heaven; that the spirit of repentance be given them.”<sup>13</sup> Livingstone went perhaps further. “Forget not Christ's command to love your enemies,” he wrote from Rotterdam to his flock at Ancrum in 1671, “and pray for them that persecute you”; and he pointed out the essential distinction between zeal and “carnal anger and bitterness.”<sup>14</sup> And again, “You would think it,” he said in a sacramental discourse, “a strange thing to see a man coming to thrust you through with a sword; but truly though it were so you ought to go to death with the prayer, ‘Good Lord, spare the life of him that woundeth me.’”<sup>15</sup> And Gabriel Semple, preaching in the parish of Kilbride in 1679, advised his hearers to pray for those in darkness in the north of Scotland and particularly for the Highland Host. “I think the Highland Host, that lately came from thence among you, might draw prayers from you.”<sup>16</sup> These words were spoken at a time when the clansmen

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<sup>10</sup> *Enquiry into Church Communion*, p. 5.

<sup>11</sup> *Ib.*, p. 7.

<sup>12</sup> *Ib.*, p. 8.

<sup>13</sup> *Poor Man's Cup of Cold Water*, M'Ward's *Tracts*, p. 204.

<sup>14</sup> *Select Biographies*, I., p. 253.

<sup>15</sup> *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 629.

<sup>16</sup> Appendix to *Faithful Contendings*, p. 131.

had just left the district, after indulging in plunder and rapine.

The "great Marquis" of Argyll studied to die "as a Christian,"<sup>17</sup> and in accordance with this profession he "pardoned all men" in his speech from the scaffold;<sup>18</sup> James Guthrie forgave all men the guilt of his death;<sup>19</sup> Johnston of Warriston on the scaffold forgave his executioner.<sup>20</sup> And these earlier and more notable examples established a precedent which was followed by the later and more obscure sufferers, especially during the earlier period. The testimonies of those who suffered after the Pentland rising are illustrative of the importance attached to the forgiving spirit during this earlier period. Hugh M'Kail freely pardoned all who were concerned in his execution,<sup>21</sup> and he was not alone in thus studiously following the example of Christ. During the whole period of the persecution, many of the martyrs, before they died, freely forgave their enemies.<sup>22</sup>

As the persecution move increased in intensity, the attitude to enemies became mixed up with the wider questions of the lawfulness of resistance or rebellion, and the legitimacy of assassination as reprisal for persecution. On this question there were differences even among the moderate Covenanters. The position of Blackadder was essentially that of "passive resistance." Believing that the times called for a testimony through suffering rather than outward deliverance, he deprecated the presence of arms at conventicles. "Trust rather in Jehovah and the shield of omnipotence" was his advice;<sup>23</sup> and while not hindering any from taking up arms whose consciences were clear, he took no personal part in either of the risings.<sup>24</sup> Fraser saw no call to arms and preached against rebellion.<sup>25</sup> Still higher ground was taken by

<sup>17</sup> Wodrow, I., p. 155.

<sup>18</sup> *Ib.*, pp. 155-157.

<sup>19</sup> *Ib.*, p. 194.

<sup>20</sup> *Ib.*, p. 361.

<sup>21</sup> *Testimonies of the Scots Worthies*, p. 112.

<sup>22</sup> Thus Captain Arnot (*ib.*, p. 94), Alexander Robertson (p. 99), and John Neilson (p. 102), all forgave their judges and executioners.

<sup>23</sup> *Memoirs*, 1st edition, p. 211.

<sup>24</sup> *Ib.*, pp. 138-139.

<sup>25</sup> *Select Biographies*, II., p. 326.

the less prominent Pringle of Greenknowe, who objected to war in itself.<sup>26</sup> On the other hand, Welch, though essentially moderate, was present at Rullion Green and Bothwell, and Semple took part in the Pentland rising.

It was left to Brown to present in theoretical and logical dress the case for armed rebellion and "defensive war in general." He appealed from the higher to the lower. "It is necessary by the law of Nature that a man defend his life. And the reason is because God hath implanted in every creature inclinations and motions to preserve itself. Each are bound to love themselves better than their neighbours, for the love of themselves is the measure of that love which they owe to their neighbour. The law of Nature alloweth one rather to kill than to be killed and to defend himself more than his neighbour."<sup>27</sup> Suggestively, Brown went to the Old Testament and the classical writers for corroboration of this attitude, and his appeals to the New Testament were few; unlike Blackadder and Fraser, he had no scruple concerning rebellion. He described the Pentland rising as a laudable enterprise.<sup>28</sup> From this view that one loves himself better than his neighbour, which is certainly a degree below the ethic of Jesus, it was easy to pass from the justification of rebellion to the justification of assassination. After Bothwell, a new ethical question of first-class importance emerged—in how far were the suffering Covenanters justified in retaliation? If the Covenanters were liable to be arrested and hurried to the scaffold, were they justified in repaying their persecutors in kind? James Mitchell, who attempted the life of Sharp, was actually the first to defend the taking of life, not on the field of battle, but by private individuals. This talented and promising young man proved from selected parts of the Old Testament, in the course of his defence of his

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<sup>26</sup> *Select Biographies*, II., pp. 431-432. He advised his sons to embrace any other lawful employment rather than be soldiers—an unusual position for the seventeenth century.

<sup>27</sup> *Apologetical Relation*, p. 163.

<sup>28</sup> *Testimonies of Scots Worthies*, p. 156.

attempt, that "it is the duty of every Christian, to the uttermost of his power and capacity, to destroy and cut off both idolatry and idolaters," and he specifically maintained that the persecuting prelates should be "put to death."<sup>29</sup>

In a modified form, this attitude of Mitchell's became that of the Cameronians. "Should we not love our enemies?" Cameron asked. "True," he replied, "we should love our enemies, but as they are the stated enemies of Christ, and going on in a state of enmity and defection from Him, they are more than our enemies." "As they are enemies to Christ, we should hate and abhor them."<sup>30</sup> He went beyond the position of abstract hatred. "Are there none," he asked, "to execute justice and judgment on these wicked men who are both treacherous and tyrannical? The Lord is calling men of all ranks and stations to execute judgment upon them. And if it be done, we cannot but justify the deed, and such are to be commended for it as Jael was. 'Blessed above all women shall Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite be.'"<sup>31</sup> Shields gave a theoretical support to this attitude in his discussion of the "extraordinary execution of judgment by private men." This cannot be "reduced to any case that can infer the guilt of murder"; therefore it cannot be condemned but justified.<sup>32</sup> He speaks of Sharp's assassins as "several worthy gentlemen, and some other men of courage and zeal for the cause of God."<sup>33</sup> At the same time Shields was at pains to point out that the exemplary punishment of only "some select and expressly distinguished kind of notorious villains, men of death and blood," could be possibly justified, and even then he strongly repudiated the charge against the Cameronians of

<sup>29</sup> *Testimonies of Scots Worthies*, p. 165.

<sup>30</sup> *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 403.

<sup>31</sup> *Ib.*, p. 415. Herkless maintains that Cameron was preaching only civil war, not assassination.—*Richard Cameron*, p. 107.

<sup>32</sup> *A Hind Let Loose*, p. 457. It is interesting to know that Blackadder at the very close of his career, during his examination before the Council, strongly condemned assassination.—*Memoirs*, 1st edition, p. 275.

<sup>33</sup> *Ib.*, p. 87.

owning assassinating principles.<sup>34</sup> Not only did he repudiate such an accusation; he made it plain that even rebellion was only a last resort. "We do not think it the way that Christ has appointed, to propagate religion by arms. . . . But we think it a privilege which Christ has allowed us, to defend and preserve our religion by arms."<sup>35</sup>

The rank and file of the Cameronians perhaps did not share Shields' scruples, theoretically at least. Patrick Walker, who, as a young man, was concerned in the shooting of a debauched and brutal soldier, had no regrets for his action. His heart, he related long afterwards, never smote him for this.<sup>36</sup> He, of course, regarded himself as a soldier in arms against the enemies of God, for it has to be borne in mind that by the terms of the Sanquhar Declaration the Cameronians had declared war on the Government. Every government agent was looked upon as an enemy, and in the Declaration of 1684 the United Societies, while declaring their detestation and abhorrence of "that hellish principle of killing all who differ in judgment and persuasion from us," threatened to punish the emissaries of the Government, according to the degree of their offence.<sup>37</sup> There is evidence to show that Renwick strongly opposed the publication of a threatening paper, but, according to Wodrow, he was "forced to go in with them to keep peace as far as might be among themselves"—contenting himself with softening the Declaration.<sup>38</sup>

Despite the theoretical justification of retaliation, and even of assassination, two historic facts bear testimony that among the great mass of the Covenanters—Cameronians as well as Moderates—the ethical ideals were of a high order, and were potent in controlling the feelings of natural resentment and hatred which enter into the souls of men during a period of brutal oppression.

<sup>34</sup> *A Hind Let Loose*, p. 379.

<sup>35</sup> *Ib.*, p. 412.

<sup>36</sup> *Six Saints of the Covenant*, I., p. 354.

<sup>37</sup> *Society People's Declaration*, Wodrow, IV., pp. 148-149.

<sup>38</sup> Wodrow, IV., p. 150. Renwick put little trust in arms, and did not believe that deliverance would come that way.—*Sermons*, p. 283.

(i.) The first of these is that assassinations were few. Sharp was the only prominent man who met his death at the hands of his opponents, and the deed was unpremeditated. One or two curates and several soldiers lost their lives during the hottest part of the persecution. When it is borne in mind that hundreds were shot in the fields and executed on the scaffold, this fact is eloquent.<sup>39</sup> Only the power of a genuine religious ethic could have brought about such a result. (ii.) The second fact is that when the Revolution came and the Presbyterians became the masters of the situation, they used their newly-found power with exemplary moderation. Even the party of the extreme left—the Cameronians—behaved with much restraint. A meeting of the United Societies, convened in Sanquhar on 23rd January 1689, “perceiving that some was too bent to take redress of these wrongs rashly at their own hand in doing whereof some disorders might be committed whereby the cause, their brethren, and themselves would suffer reproach for preventing whereof they thought it expedient that such persons as were in the foresaid cases should not at their own hand take redress ; seeing there were now some hopes of getting these and other things redressed in a legal and orderly manner.”<sup>40</sup>

This manifesto practically put a stop to the process of “rabbling the curates” which had been commanded just after the Revolution in the south-western shires.<sup>41</sup> Yet this rabbling, of which so much has been made by historians of Royalist sympathies, was accompanied by little or no bodily harm to the curates. Patrick Walker, who belonged to the militant wing of the Cameronians, and who, as a young man, took part in these rabblings, declared long afterwards that he had many times since “thought that all who put their hands to that good work

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<sup>39</sup> Wodrow gave the number of assassinations as four or five. “In a few months’ time,” he said, “there were twenty times that number cut off by people upon the other side.”—III., p. 53.

<sup>40</sup> *Faithful Contendings*, p. 317.

<sup>41</sup> Dodds, *Fifty Years’ Struggle of the Scottish Covenanters*, p. 390.

ought to be thankful that there fell not something out in our hands to make us ashamed and our names contemptible, all things considered, especially what they had been and done, and that the reins were now laid upon our necks to do what we pleased, and yet nothing was done by us to any but what we might avow." <sup>42</sup> That this was so is the strongest testimony to the existence of the restraining force of a genuinely ethical religion.

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<sup>42</sup> *Six Saints of the Covenant*, I., pp. 321-322

## CHAPTER VIII

### SOCIAL ETHICS

THE Covenanters have been adversely criticised by historians and writers of various schools of thought for their alleged interference in politics. They have been accused of political preaching, and of dabbling in affairs of state. If such was the case—and such assertions are usually exaggerated—the circumstances of the time compelled the adoption of a political policy. The persecution of the Covenanters was, as has been noted,<sup>1</sup> first and foremost a political persecution, and both the moderate Covenanters and those of the more extreme school had necessarily a policy called forth by the circumstances of the time. Like other Calvinists, they had a certain conception of the right ordering of the world, and a certain idea of the line of action which should be followed in view of the circumstances of the times ; and in times of stress and strain—as long ago as the days of the prophets of Israel, and as recently as 1914-1918—preaching tends to become more or less coloured by current events, and the dividing line between politics and religion becomes less and less distinctive.

The general principle underlying the policy of the Covenanting leaders was set forth at the beginning of the persecution by John Livingstone just before his ejection from Ancrum. Dealing with the view that a man should not “ hazard himself and his ministry ” by speaking some things which he should have left alone, he asked, “ What needs him do so ? Faith and repentance, let him preach these. Truly, we think that well : faith and repentance

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<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Chapter II.

we think very comprehensive duties ; and I confess, I never delight to hear a man that the most part of all his preaching is what we call on the public and to meddle with state matters. But there are times and seasons wherein a man's silence may bring a curse upon his head." <sup>2</sup> The representative leaders of the Covenanters believed the times and seasons in which they lived to be of such a nature. Only in "a clear exigence," M'Ward maintained, were public matters to be meddled with. But, he asked, "Are public matters transacted without private men's accession? Or in this accessory, has conscience no concernment?" And in reply to the charge that public policy does not concern the souls of men, he sarcastically exclaimed, "Oh, the rare temper of this new device, that both inwardly elevates to the highest spiritual abstraction, and outwardly smooths to a most easy temporising compliance." <sup>3</sup> It is therefore plain that to these men politics was no mere game; rather they conceived politics as social ethics, the working out in the national life of the ideas which they held of God and of man's relation to Him.

As outlined in the second chapter, the chief political factor in Britain in the seventeenth century was the effort of the Crown, supported by the Royalist party, to drive to its logical conclusion the Absolutist theory of the State: The circumstances of the time provided the Crown first in the earlier decades of the century, and, secondly, in the later, with an unrivalled opportunity. In both cases, the Crown found the Kirk the only effective rallying-ground in Scotland of the forces of opposition. In the first period, Charles I. had contrived to alienate the nobles as well as the clergy, and the joint protest of both classes found expression in the National Covenant. In the second period, Charles II. had the nobles on his side,

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<sup>2</sup> Substance of a Discourse by Mr John Livingstone, *Select Biographies*, I., p. 207. At the close of the persecution, Shields criticised the plea for individual preaching in similar terms.—*Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 594.

<sup>3</sup> *The True Nonconformist*, p. 61.

and a considerable number of the ministers unwilling to oppose him; but an organised opposition nevertheless existed in the outed ministers, who formed what has been called the "Church in the fields."<sup>4</sup> To the Absolutist theory of the State, these men and their supporters were able to oppose their doctrine of the Church, which carried with it an attitude to the State. The doctrine of the visible Church had been brought from Geneva by John Knox, and had been developed during the struggles during the reign of James VI. by Melville and others, and in the earlier Covenanting period by Henderson, Gillespie, and the chief leaders of the Kirk. Possibly this doctrine was unique.

I. In some respects it bore closer affinity to the Roman doctrine than to that accepted by the Erastian or sectarian communities. The Kirk was not merely the Church of Scotland; it was the representative in Scotland of the Church universal. For the Reformers, as already noted, practically took over from the Romanists the idea of catholicity, and the earlier Covenanting writers maintained this position. The true Catholic Church was world-wide; and from this the Roman hierarchy had separated, "as the rotten wall maketh the schism in the house, when the house standeth still and the rotten wall falleth."<sup>5</sup> The Scottish churchman did not "unchurch" the Romanists, recognising among them many representatives of true Christianity.<sup>6</sup> The doctrine of the visible Church in the period of persecution was well summarised by Brown. "The Catholic Church," he said, "hath been sometimes more, sometimes less visible. And particular churches, which are members thereof are more or less

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<sup>4</sup> C. G. M'Crie, *The Church of Scotland, Her Divisions and Reunions*, p. 22.

<sup>5</sup> Rutherford, *Peaceable and Temperate Plea*, p. 122.

<sup>6</sup> Rev. J. Macpherson, *Doctrine of the Church in Scottish Theology*, p. 113. Rutherford stated indeed that the Roman Church was not to be compared to a dead man, but rather to a sick and dying man. It is interesting to note that despite the animosity against Rome, baptism by Roman priests was recognised as valid by early Scottish theologians, inasmuch as the Roman Church was a branch of the visible Church.

pure according as the doctrine of the gospel is taught and embraced, ordinances administered and public worship performed, more or less purely in them." Yet, he added, "the purest churches under heaven are subject both to mixture and error, and some have so degenerated as to become no churches of Christ, but synagogues of Satan." <sup>7</sup> There is only one Church in the world, maintained Brown, of which all churches are members in particular. "And though in their particular meetings they have a nearer communion with those who are part of the given meeting, yet they have a potential and remoter communion with all the members of the visible Church." <sup>8</sup>

Renwick and Shields emphasised the distinction between "a joining which we may call catholic or universal among Christians considered as such, and an ecclesiastical joining among members of one particular organical Church, considered as members of that Church." They affirm that there could be union with "Christians holding the same fundamentals." <sup>9</sup> They were at pains indeed to show that they did not unchurch members of the Roman Church as such. "If we were in Africa or Asia," Shields explicitly stated, "we would join with all Christians holding the same testimony against Jews, Turks, or Pagans." <sup>10</sup> There is, of course, a still closer union among all Protestants, and within this, among those bound together by Covenant. <sup>11</sup> Thus the Scottish Kirk was viewed as no mere isolated organisation; there could be no question of regarding it simply as the nation on its religious side. The United Societies, during the discussion concerning the ministerial status of James Renwick, authoritatively stated that "the Church of Groningen did not make him a minister of the Church of Scotland, but

<sup>7</sup> Rev. J. Macpherson, *Doctrine of the Church in Scottish Theology*, p. 102.

<sup>8</sup> Quoted by Walker, *Theology and Theologians of Scotland*, p. 107. Cf. Fleming's similar position, *Fulfilling of the Scripture*, p. 285.

<sup>9</sup> *Informatory Vindication*, p. 136 ff.; *A Hind Let Loose*, pp. 157-158.

<sup>10</sup> *Enquiry into Church Communion*, p. 37.

<sup>11</sup> *Informatory Vindication*, p. 163.

they ordained him a minister of Christ and steward of the mysteries of God : a minister of the Church universal—which is the primary relation of all ministers : a minister in any Church whereof he was a member, and so consequently in Scotland.”<sup>12</sup> And it was simply as “a minister of Jesus Christ,”<sup>13</sup> a minister of the universal Church, that Cargill, at the Torwood, passed the sentence of excommunication on the rulers of the Kingdom. Shields’ defence of Cargill’s action was in itself suggestive. He cited the example of Ambrose in excommunicating Valentinian the tyrant and the Emperor Theodosius, thus indicating that in his opinion the representative of the Catholic Church in Scotland stood on exactly the same footing and could lawfully exercise the same powers as a bishop of the old Catholic Church.<sup>14</sup>

There could therefore be no point, in the eyes of the thorough-going Covenanters, in the charge of schism which was levelled against them. Even the Cameronian party stoutly denied the accusation that they had separated from the Church in Scotland. Brown, who was the founder of theoretical Cameronianism, laid it down that “those who separate from the worst and greatest part do notwithstanding remain a part of and a part in the visible Church. . . . Though people should withdraw from communion with the greatest part of the Church which is now corrupted, they cannot be accounted separatists.”<sup>15</sup> Michael Shields was careful to point out that the United Societies did not at any time consider their general meetings to be “ecclesiastical judicatories.”<sup>16</sup> They did not, said Renwick and Shields, constitute a Church, but had been called into being only by the exigencies of the times.<sup>17</sup> The separation from the “Scottish Covenanted Church” was but a negative

<sup>12</sup> *Faithful Contendings*, p. 236.

<sup>13</sup> The Excommunication in *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 498.

<sup>14</sup> *A Hind Let Loose*, p. 227.

<sup>15</sup> *Apologetical Relation*, p. 292.

<sup>16</sup> *Faithful Contendings*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>17</sup> *Informatory Vindication*, Head IV.

separation—"passively considered in our being left alone at first in the time of our greatest straits and forsaken by the rest."<sup>18</sup>

II. Over and above this idea of catholicity was the principle of the Headship of Christ, the necessary coping-stone of the edifice. Here, of course, was a fundamental difference between Scottish Protestantism and Romanism. In the Scottish view, Christ was the only Head of the Church, and the Pope was no vicegerent, but a usurper. Even more vehemently the Covenanters dissented from the Erastian view which made the civil magistrate the head of the branch of the Church in any given nation. "Thus it fell out in England," observed M'Ward, "after the Reformation, that the same, if not a more exorbitant power taken from the Pope, was transferred and settled upon the Crown."<sup>19</sup> The papacy was still retained; only the person was changed "from the Pope to the King."<sup>20</sup> And this was more odious still, "the Pope being at least in show a Church man."<sup>21</sup> Erastianism was equally with Popery an encroachment of the rights of the Redeemer. "Jesus Christ Himself and not the civil magistrate is the author and fountain of Church power and government."<sup>22</sup> The kingdom of Christ "is another kingdom than the kingdoms of this world; for wherever Christ has a Church, there is a kingdom. . . . Sometimes one of the kingdoms of the world joins itself unto the Church."<sup>23</sup> It was, of course, obvious that the Church of Christ must enter into relations of some kind with the State in the various kingdoms of the world; and the theorists of the time visualised a friendly alliance of Church and State. Sir James Stewart, who wrote the introduction to *Naphtali*, while rebutting the argument of the "absurdity and inconsistency of two collateral and

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<sup>18</sup> *Informatory Vindication*, p. 79.

<sup>19</sup> *The True Nonconformist*, p. 471.

<sup>20</sup> *Ib.*, p. 467.

<sup>21</sup> *Ib.*, p. 471.

<sup>22</sup> *Naphtali*, p. 33.

<sup>23</sup> Blackadder, Sermon in Appendix to *Faithful Contendings*, p. 94.

co-ordinate supreme powers and government in one kingdom," maintained that Church and State so far from being hurtful are, if rightly managed, "singularly helpful to one another."<sup>24</sup> It was, indeed, a favourite opinion that the civil magistracy was ordained by God as Creator, and the Church by God in and through Christ as Redeemer.<sup>25</sup> And the bias of the thought of the time was towards viewing the civil magistrate as deserving of all honour and obedience in matters civil, ministers being subject to him politically. Even the Cameronian Shields laid it down that "the fountain or efficient cause of magistracy is high and sublime." "The powers that are, be of God, not only by the all-disposing hand of God in His providence, as tyranny is, nor only by way of naked approbation, but by divine institution."<sup>26</sup>

I. The principle of the Headship of Christ over a universal Church, existing independently of the State, produced first and foremost an attitude not only to the State but to pretensions of rank and power in general, which was confirmed and strengthened by the dissolute lives of the king and the chief rulers of the kingdom. It tended to a virile belief in human equality, and as a by-product to championship of the rights of the poor and oppressed. All men are equal, said Sir James Stewart, "and none over another by name"; for no man is born "with a crown on his head and a sceptre in his hand."<sup>27</sup> Kings remain "men of the like passions and infirmities with the rest—yea, and subject to more temptations."<sup>28</sup> And Shields remarked scornfully that "the institution of monarchy in general does not make James Stewart a king no more than John Chamberlain."<sup>29</sup> Livingstone spoke of the king as a "mortal creature."<sup>30</sup> Welch declared that "the poorest man or woman that has an

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<sup>24</sup> *Naphtali*, p. 36.

<sup>25</sup> *Ib.*, p. 36. Shields, *A Hind Let Loose*, p. 173.

<sup>26</sup> *A Hind Let Loose*, p. 191.

<sup>27</sup> *Jus Populi Vindicatum*, p. 85.

<sup>28</sup> *Ib.*, p. 83.

<sup>29</sup> *A Hind Let Loose*, p. 238.

<sup>30</sup> *Select Biographies*, I., p. 242.

interest in Christ, however contemptible here, shall sit above kings, queens, princes, dukes, marquises, earls, and lords of the earth: nay, more, they shall be assessors with Jesus Christ in judgment.”<sup>31</sup> Blackadder, himself of aristocratic lineage, referred scathingly and with a touch of irony to the “great folk” and their disdain to Christ’s kingdom.<sup>32</sup> Guthrie explicitly stated, at the very beginning of the persecution, that Christ gave Himself for “very few great folk.” “The great folk cannot endure to have Christ and His people in the land.”<sup>33</sup> Welwood, too, handled the nobility and gentry with great freedom, not only for their compliance with apostasy and their bad example, but “for their oppression of the poor and racking of rents.”<sup>34</sup> Cameron specifically asserted the equality of men whatever their class. “Great men should not despise poor folk, though there were a great difference between them.” The great men are “no more in Christ’s sight than the poorest beggar that goes on the ground.”<sup>35</sup> And in another connection, Cargill went out of his way to show his sympathy for the poor, bidding the “man of low degree” to rejoice.<sup>36</sup> The Covenanting cause, said Sir James Stewart, fared better “without the concurrence of nobles.”<sup>37</sup>

II. This attitude to the so-called higher class was indicative of the general position taken up towards constituted authority. To begin with, there was little or no loyalty to the State as such: loyalty was conditional on, and subordinate to, morality, and there was no abstract conception of the State as apart from the Government of the day, such as has developed within the last two centuries.<sup>38</sup> Sir James Stewart, the great legal mind of the Covenanting movement, laid down what may almost

<sup>31</sup> Appendix to *Faithful Contendings*, p. 59.

<sup>32</sup> *Ib.*, p. 94.

<sup>33</sup> *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 189.

<sup>34</sup> *Ib.*, p. 347.

<sup>35</sup> *Ib.*, pp. 397-398.

<sup>36</sup> Lecture at Torwood, *Ib.*, p. 492.

<sup>37</sup> *Jus Populi Vindicatum*, p. 86.

<sup>38</sup> It is interesting to notice Kirkton’s frank criticism of the “inglorious war” with Holland in 1666, and his scarcely concealed sympathy with the Presbyterian Dutch.—*History*, pp. 214-215.

be called a forecast of the modern idea of national self-determination. Even as the form of the State is a matter for settlement by practical considerations, so is the size and extent of the State. It is an open question "whether people living at some considerable distance from the other, or more contiguously, should join together in one and make up one body politic; or whether they should erect more distinct and independent commonwealths, though possibly of the same extract and language. Nature sayeth not that all in one island, of one extract or of one language, should become one politic body under one politic head."<sup>39</sup> For the State, in Stewart's reasoning, is simply a means to an end; and "this end which they intend as men must be their continued peace and tranquility, freedom from oppression from strangers or one from another, and the like; and as Christians the glory of God, the good of religion and of their souls."<sup>40</sup> And as there was no loyalty to an abstract ideal of the State, so loyalty to the king was very qualified. Stewart argued that there was no particular reason, except a practical one, for the preference of the hereditary to the elective principle, or of monarchy to republicanism. Originally and radically the king is chosen by the people;<sup>41</sup> the king and his subjects are bound by covenant one to another.<sup>42</sup> Just as in all other relations which arise from mutual consent, such as those between man and wife, master and servant, tutor and pupil, master and scholar, there are conditions on which the relationship is founded. And when the sovereign does not perform the conditions "condescended and agreed upon, *de jure* he falleth from his sovereignty."<sup>43</sup> From this idea of a covenant, Stewart concluded that, even as early as the first decade of the Restoration régime, Charles II., by repudiating the Covenant, had broken the contract in virtue of which he had been called to the throne.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> *Jus Populi Vindicatum*, p. 84; also pp. 370-371.

<sup>40</sup> *Ib.*, p. 87.

<sup>41</sup> *Ib.*, p. 86

<sup>42</sup> *Ib.*, p. 97. Cf. Shields, *A Hind Let Loose*, p. 242.

<sup>43</sup> *Jus Populi Vindicatum*, p. 112.

<sup>44</sup> *Ib.*, p. 140

Of course, reasoning of this kind was not new in Scotland. In the earlier stages of the Covenanting movement, such views had been openly promulgated. Robert Douglas, in preaching the sermon at Scone on the occasion of the coronation of Charles II. in 1651, had declared the royal power to be limited by contract.<sup>45</sup> Rutherford, in his classic, *Lex Rex*, had affirmed that power is not an inheritance from heaven bestowed upon kings, but a birthright of the people borrowed from them; and it is common knowledge that Rutherford was in great measure indebted to George Buchanan, whose *De Jure Regni* had in the sixteenth century roused the ire of James VI.<sup>46</sup> It is perhaps not without significance that Buchanan had in his early days studied under John Major, who, though no Protestant, held strong views on the limitation of kingly power, which were not improbably connected with the old Catholic view of the visible Church, which was in itself fatal to the conception of regal Absolutism. "Everything, indeed, that Buchanan himself has said regarding the royal prerogative in Scotland," as the late Dr Hume Brown pointed out, "Major said before him with the quaint bluntness and directness that marks his style." "As it was the people who first made kings," said Major, "so the people can dethrone them when they misuse their privileges." He went even farther than this. "As it is for the benefit of the whole body that an unhealthy member be removed, so is it for the welfare of the State that a tyrant be cut off."<sup>47</sup>

Thus even during the exuberant loyalty of 1660, a radical idea of the State and democratic attitude to kingship was by no means unfamiliar to thinking men. And to large numbers, Charles II. himself was suspect. The fact that he had signed the Covenant might reassure the ignorant and simple-minded; it did not allay the suspicions

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<sup>45</sup> Coronation sermon, reprinted in *The Covenants and the Covenanters*, p. 364.

<sup>46</sup> It is significant that *De Jure Regni* was burned with *Lex Rex*.

<sup>47</sup> Quoted by Hume Brown, *George Buchanan*, p. 281. See also MacEwen, *History of the Church in Scotland*, II., p. 3; *Lives of Eminent Scotsmen*, III., pp. 54-55; M'Crie's *Life of Knox*, pp. 4-5.

in the minds of the leaders, and especially of the Protesters, that the Covenant would be broken. Another important factor in sapping respect for authority was the notorious dissoluteness of Charles' personal life and of the lives of his Scottish officers of state. Nevertheless, in the earlier period the Covenanting leaders did not drive their own theories to their logical conclusion. They had apparently resolved to walk warily, and one cannot but be struck by their temperateness and studied moderation.<sup>48</sup> The petition of the Presbytery of Edinburgh to Parliament in 1661, while supplicating for the establishment, maintenance, and defence of the true religion, was almost sycophantic in tone.<sup>49</sup> In the following year the Presbytery of Kirkcudbright, while more assertive, "humbly beseeched" Parliament to give a "favourable answer" to just, reasonable, and necessary desires, and the petition closed with expressions of loyalty.<sup>50</sup> Six ministers, signing an explication of the sense in which they took the oath of allegiance, went as far as they could in the way of conciliation, acknowledging the king as the only lawful supreme governor, admitting that "his sovereignty reacheth all persons and all causes, as well ecclesiastical as civil," but adding the qualification "albeit it be in its own nature only civil and extrinsic as to causes ecclesiastical."<sup>51</sup> M'Ward was summoned before Parliament for his alleged seditious sermon in Glasg w, in which he boldly declared that sin had been made national "by precept and practice." In his supplication to Parliament, M'Ward went out of his way to declare his loyalty. He pledged himself indeed to carry himself "as a loyal subject, abstaining from all things that might look like a shadow of reflection upon his majesty's person and government"; but after this almost

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<sup>48</sup> Hugh M'Kail's attitude was exceptional at the time, and his language unusually outspoken. His reference to the people of God as persecuted by "a Pharaoh on the throne, a Haman in the state, and a Judas in the Church" was generally accepted as an attack on the king and his government.—*Naphtali*, p. 256.

<sup>49</sup> Wodrow, I., pp. 112-113.

<sup>50</sup> *Ib.*, pp. 254-255.

<sup>51</sup> *Ib.*, p. 295.

fulsome profession of loyalty, he added the important qualification that he purposed "giving to God the things that are God's, and to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's." <sup>52</sup>

(i.) The moderate party contented themselves with asserting the negative aspect of their view of the State—which meant in effect the right of the individual conscience to obey God rather than man. "Materially, virtually, and eminently," said Livingstone, "he obeys his Master when he obeys the light of his own conscience, so far as he can attain to a clearness in it." <sup>53</sup> Thus Blackadder maintained in his examination before the Council that he was under the strictest obligation to exercise his ministry, whatever acts of parliament had been passed, his commission being "from the Word of God." <sup>54</sup> "We are met this day," said John Welch, at a communion at Maybole in 1678, "in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, the King and Head of His Church. These meetings, ye know, are forbidden by authority, but there is One greater than they that commands the contrary of what they command, and His command must be obeyed." <sup>55</sup> This sense of a direct relation to and responsibility to God impelled these men to refuse and condemn the various Indulgences which were offered from time to time. The State, they perceived, had no business either to prohibit a man from exercising his ministry, or to grant him permission; the power of the Crown in these matters was usurped power. <sup>56</sup> Thus Blackadder declared that

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<sup>52</sup> Wodrow, I., pp. 214-215.

<sup>53</sup> *Select Biographies*, I., p. 211.

<sup>54</sup> *Memoirs*, p. 295.

<sup>55</sup> *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 643.

<sup>56</sup> It has been maintained that the Covenanters merely preferred the authority of the Covenant to that of the monarch. But there can be no doubt that the individual conscience was the ultimate factor. The rights of the conscience were peculiarly cogently maintained by one of the more obscure preachers, John Rae. Wodrow records that before the battle of Bothwell Brig, Sir Robert Hamilton attempted to dictate to Rae as to his attitude in public preaching. Rae replied that he "had been wrestling against Erastianism in the magistrature for many years; and he would never truckle to the worst kind of Erastianism in the common people: that he

embracing the Indulgence was "too like compliance with the supremacy"—admitting the existence of a right which was non-existent.<sup>57</sup> The bond was condemned on similar grounds.<sup>58</sup> In harmony with this negative attitude, the resistance of the Covenanters in the earlier period was a passive resistance. The Pentland rising does not disprove this; for it was a mere accident, having its origin in a local riot. Later on it became customary to carry arms to conventicles—a practice which Blackadder strongly deprecated, counselling his hearers on more than one occasion to put little trust in weapons of war.<sup>59</sup> That Welch was less pacific than Blackadder is evident from his presence in the camp both at Rullion Green and Bothwell, but on the latter occasion he was there as a moderating influence, anxious to avoid bloodshed and not unwilling to negotiate to that end.

(ii.) By the time of the Bothwell rising, a sharp division of opinion had arisen not only as to the Indulgence, but also in regard to active resistance and revolution. The difference is seen in the two declarations issued at Hamilton and at Rutherglen. The moderates still owned allegiance to the king as civil ruler. While strenuously denying his supremacy and his right to grant an Indulgence, even Sir James Stewart, in his defence of the Pentland rising, had distinguished between resisting the "very person of the magistrate" (meaning the king himself), and "resisting his bloody emissaries."<sup>60</sup> And he is careful to deny the charge that the Covenanters are out to "punish" even wicked kings. Their aim is only to resist their

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would receive no instructions from him nor any of them as to the subject and matter of his sermons; and wished he might mind what belonged to him and not go beyond his sphere and station."—Wodrow, III., p. 93. This is the more significant in that Rae was an uncompromising resister to Absolutism. He was the preacher at the famous Whitekirk conventicle in 1678 which issued in a skirmish and the arrest of Learmonth (*Historical Notices of Scottish Affairs*, Fountainhall, I., p. 196); and he was ultimately apprehended, and died in prison on the Bass (*The Bass Rock*, p. 371).

<sup>57</sup> *Memoirs*, p. 264.

<sup>58</sup> *The Banders Disbanded*, p. 25.

<sup>59</sup> *Memoirs*, pp. 211, 230-231.

<sup>60</sup> *Jus Populi Vindicatum*, p. 14.

unjust violence.<sup>61</sup> But they were outwardly loyal. The authors of the *Plea for Persecuted Ministers*, written in 1677, while threatening to refer their cause to the righteous tribunal of the just and almighty God, addressed the "most noble and honourable lords of his majesty's secret council" in a deferential and respectful tone. Sir James Stewart, while vindicating active resistance from grounds of reason and Scripture, does so only "when neither flying nor hiding nor other such like means of safety are practicable."<sup>62</sup> In the Hamilton Declaration, in the drafting of which Welch took a leading part, the appeal to arms is spoken of as the "last remedy." Loyalty was professed, any desire to diminish the king's "just power and greatness" was repudiated, and a free and unlimited Parliament and a free Assembly were demanded.<sup>63</sup> The Rutherglen Declaration breathed the spirit of defiance. Its authors not only read it at the Cross; they publicly burned copies of the various reactionary Acts of Parliament since 1660.<sup>64</sup>

This attitude of open defiance and active resistance was not new. It was a logical development from the Covenanting doctrine of the Church, and its corollary, of the State. It was outlined as early as 1665 by Brown of Wamphray. Defending the Covenanters against the charge of sedition, Brown said, "There is a great difference between active disobeying of, rebelling against and violently, with force of arms, resisting the lawful magistrate doing his duty and commanding just things warranted by the laws of God and the land, and disobeying his unjust acts and resisting his violent, tyrannical, oppressing, plundering, spoiling, and killing armies."<sup>65</sup> Thus the legitimacy of active resistance was made to depend on the moral standing of the civil power. In a truly Christian commonwealth all laws should be "for the glory of God and the good of the souls of the subjects

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<sup>61</sup> *Jus Populi Vindicatum*, p. 360.

<sup>63</sup> Wodrow, III., pp. 94-95.

<sup>65</sup> *Apologetical Relation*, p. 153.

<sup>62</sup> *Ib.*, p. 259.

<sup>64</sup> *Ib.*, pp. 66-67.

mainly, and for their external well-being only in subordination unto these great ends." <sup>66</sup> "Neither ministers nor others are bound at the magistrate's command to sin against God." <sup>67</sup> "We are most willing to render chiefly unto God the things that are God's, and secondarily to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's." <sup>68</sup> Obedience to rulers was strictly subordinate to morality; and by rulers Brown meant not only kings but parliaments, the members of which he defined as "trustees intrusted by the people whose commissioners they are." <sup>69</sup> Stewart, writing from the legal as much as from the religious point of view, expressed himself even more strongly. Kings have no lordly or dominative power over their subjects. <sup>70</sup> They are not even proprietors of their kingdoms. Their power is properly only "a fiduciary power." <sup>71</sup> And what is true of kings is equally true of parliaments, which are not themselves fountains of power. The parliaments are merely the people's representatives. "Why, then, shall the perfidy of the people's representatives, or their betraying of their trust, wrong their cause and prejudice them of their just right? . . . It is as lawful for an offended people to defend themselves from the injuries of a parliament as from the injuries of a sovereign, if not more." <sup>72</sup> No form of government is sacrosanct. Government may be either monarchical or aristocratic or democratic, or a blend of all three. "For though God and Nature hath instituted government, yet not having determined any one form to be the only lawful form, people are at liberty to walk here on rational grounds and consult their own advantage. . . . So it followeth that it is merely from the people that this form and not another is made choice of." <sup>73</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> *Jus Populi Vindicatum*, p. 69.

<sup>67</sup> *Apologetical Relation*, p. 25.

<sup>68</sup> *Banders Disbanded (Tracts)*, p. 84.

<sup>69</sup> *Apologetical Relation*, p. 57.

<sup>70</sup> *Jus Populi Vindicatum*, p. 146.

<sup>71</sup> *Ib.*, pp. 148-149. Shields, *A Hind Let Loose*, p. 246

<sup>72</sup> *Ib.*, p. 39.

<sup>73</sup> *Ib.*, p. 83.

At all events, whether by absolute king or by parliament, the invasion of Christ's prerogative was not to be tolerated, and to the Covenanters as a whole, Charles II., in assuming the supremacy, played the part of a usurper. "What address is possible," asked M'Ward, "to him who is thus set down in the Mediator's chair of state and wears his crown in our sight, without sin." <sup>74</sup> M'Ward in another place spoke of Charles as "the usurper seated in the throne of Christ," <sup>75</sup> the most absolute usurper of that throne "that ever the world heard of." <sup>76</sup> Further, Charles, "that usurper," was characterised as "that stated enemy to Christ," <sup>77</sup> whose supremacy was a betrayal of religion and a defiance of heaven. <sup>78</sup> From this theoretical position there followed, naturally, the attitude actually taken up by Cargill and Cameron and their followers. Cargill, while reiterating the view that loyalty is not unconditional but dependent on the moral character of kings and governors, <sup>79</sup> denounced Charles not only as a tyrant, but for his uncleanness, his drunkenness, and his perjury. <sup>80</sup> Cameron spoke of the king as an abominable person, <sup>81</sup> the devil's vicegerent, <sup>82</sup> "one of the most vile adulterers that live." <sup>83</sup> Renwick spoke as freely of James VII., as the sworn vassal of Antichrist; <sup>84</sup> and Shields characterised the same prince as a monster of tyranny and perfidy. <sup>85</sup>

(iii.) The logical outcome of this attitude was the repudiation of allegiance to such governors, and this was done in the Queensferry Paper, found in the possession of Henry Hall of Haughhead at his apprehension, and though unsigned, generally conceded to be in the main the work of Cargill. This document is of importance as

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<sup>74</sup> *Poor Man's Cup of Cold Water*, Tracts, p. 208.

<sup>75</sup> *Earnest Contendings*, p. 33.

<sup>76</sup> *Ib.*, p. 131.

<sup>77</sup> *Ib.*, p. 174.

<sup>78</sup> *Ib.*, p. 334.—"Religion-betraying and heaven-defying supremacy."

<sup>79</sup> *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 493.

<sup>80</sup> The Excommunication, *ib.*, p. 499.

<sup>81</sup> *Ib.*, p. 411.

<sup>82</sup> *Ib.*, p. 424.

<sup>83</sup> *Ib.*, p. 409.

<sup>84</sup> Renwick's *Sermons*, p. 575.

<sup>85</sup> *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 595.

marking the final stage in the Covenanting thought on the subject. While others had shown that the king had broken the social contract, that he was ethically unfitted to receive the obedience of his subjects, and that kings might be deposed, the authors of the paper draw the obvious inference and definitely withdrew allegiance. After deciding that the House of Stewart could not be trusted, they proceeded to reject the king and practically to establish a community of their own—a kind of State within the State. In the outline of this new State, the authors of the paper declared against hereditary monarchy altogether, “government by a single person being most liable to inconveniences, and aptest to degenerate into tyranny, as sad and long experience hath taught us.”<sup>86</sup> The new commonwealth was to be a kind of republic, its laws modelled on the laws of ancient Israel. The paper closed with a warning that “if we be pursued or troubled any farther, in worshipping, rights and liberties, that we shall look on it as a declaring war, and take all the advantages that one enemy doth of another, and seek to cause to perish all that shall, in a hostile measure, assault us, and to maintain, relieve, and right ourselves of those that have wronged us, but not to trouble or injure any but those who have injured us.”<sup>87</sup>

The subsequent papers and declarations of the Cameronian party represent the gradual development of the policy outlined in this, perhaps the most important document of all. At Sanquhar, Cameron simply disowned Charles Stewart, as “having any title to or interest in” the Crown or Government of Scotland, which had been forfeited by cause of breaches of Covenant, usurpation of Christ’s prerogative, and civil tyranny. Against such a tyrant and usurper, Cameron and his associates declared war,<sup>88</sup> but while threatening active resistance, they did not positively establish a State of their own, nor did they threaten reprisals against specific persecutors. At the

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<sup>86</sup> Queensferry Paper, Wodrow, III., p. 210.

<sup>87</sup> *Ib.*, p. 211.

<sup>88</sup> Sanquhar Declaration, *ib.*, pp. 212-213.

Torwood, Cargill carried the movement a stage farther. Taking the Sanquhar policy for granted, he excommunicated the king and his chief advisers, who had now been disowned civilly and cut off from the fellowship of the visible Church.<sup>89</sup> By 1684 the policy of reprisals implicit in the Queensferry Paper had been definitely adopted,<sup>90</sup> and the United Societies had endorsed the document practically in its entirety. They certainly did not consider themselves to be a separate Church,<sup>91</sup> but they were practically a separate State. They had thrown off all allegiance to the king, and regarded themselves as in a state of war against him and his advisers; their members were forbidden to pay taxes or to contribute to the support of the Erastian clergy or to recognise the jurisdiction of the courts of law.<sup>92</sup> Indeed, Renwick counselled his hearers on one occasion to "disobey all tyrannical power, cost what it will."<sup>93</sup>

It now remained to formulate theoretically and philosophically this ultimate development of Covenanting thought. This was done by Alexander Shields in his work, *A Hind Let Loose*, published anonymously in 1687. In this work, revolutionary as it was in its attitude to the State, Shields was careful to make plain his attitude to anarchy. "As tyranny is a destructive plague to all the interests of men and Christians, so anarchy, the usual product of it, is no less pernicious, bringing a community into a paroxysm as deadly and dangerous."<sup>94</sup> Government is absolutely necessary in the interests of society, and active opposition to the magistrate should not be lightly undertaken. Difference of religious opinion, even though the magistrate be a heathen, is no valid reason for

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<sup>89</sup> The Excommunication, *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 498. Cargill's text for his lecture on this occasion was Ezekiel xxi. 25-27, including the words "Thus saith the Lord God, remove the diadem and take off the crown."

<sup>90</sup> *Apologetical Declaration*, Wodrow, IV., pp. 148-149.

<sup>91</sup> *Informatory Vindication*, p. 79; *Faithful Contendings*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>92</sup> Hutchison, *Reformed Presbyterian Church*, p. 59.

<sup>93</sup> Renwick's *Sermons*, p. 104.

<sup>94</sup> *A Hind Let Loose*, p. 211.

disobedience.<sup>95</sup> And while not ruling out the lawfulness of secession from the body politic, Shields was careful to say, "Neither are we for new erections of government, but are for keeping the society of which we are members, entire."<sup>96</sup> While obviously inclining, like Cargill, to Republicanism,<sup>97</sup> he refrained from a definite pronouncement as to which kind of government is preferable. The starting point of Shields' argument is the inalienable right of human beings to freedom. Freedom is natural to all, flowing from the sacredness of human personality.<sup>98</sup> "As no lion is born king of lions," so much less is any man born "king of men," lord of men, or representative or ruler of men.<sup>99</sup> This attitude is fatal not only to the doctrine of the divine right of kings; it is equally fatal to the divine right of parliaments. All power is from the people, and members of parliament and governors are but the people's delegates; and as "the cause is more than the effect," so "parliament-men do represent the people—the people do not represent the parliament."<sup>100</sup> There is therefore no warrant for blind obedience. The human conscience is the ultimate seat of authority; it demands obedience to just and righteous rulers, but "tyrannical powers" are on a different footing. Conscience must deny tyranny, which is not ordained by God.<sup>1</sup> Only a government founded upon a "bottom of conscience" will unite the "governed to the governors" by inclination as well as duty.<sup>2</sup>

Such an attitude to the State was bound to influence men's minds in regard to military service. Not that the Cameronians denied the lawfulness of war;<sup>3</sup> the lawfulness of defensive war, by which they meant rebellion, was all along one of their tenets. They objected, however, to

<sup>95</sup> *A Hind Let Loose*, p. 208.

<sup>96</sup> *Ib.*, p. 214.

<sup>97</sup> *Ib.*, p. 208. Shields believed that "kings and tyrants" were "for the most part reciprocal terms."

<sup>98</sup> *Ib.*, p. 212: "Every man created according to God's image is a sacred thing."

<sup>99</sup> *Ib.*, p. 213.

<sup>100</sup> *Ib.*, p. 213.

<sup>1</sup> *Ib.*, p. 391.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, p. 192.

<sup>3</sup> It was the question of rebellion rather than that of war between nations, however, that chiefly concerned the Covenanting writers.

any doctrine of blind obedience. During the negotiations concerning the enlistment of the society people in the regiment raised under the command of Lord Angus in support of the Revolution, a "humble petition" was drafted by those desirous of serving in the regiment. Among the desires expressed was one that "our officers be always of our own choice or approbation; and that none be obtruded upon us without our consent . . . that as soon as peace is settled and fears of rebellion or invasion cease, such as have a mind to go off, to have liberty and their vacancies supplied with the approbation of the rest."<sup>4</sup> In another draft of the same petition, the demand was made that "officers superior and inferior be such that we can in confidence and prudence confidently submit unto and follow."<sup>5</sup> It is not surprising that the military authorities, even of the Revolution Government, ruled out such requests as subversive of discipline.<sup>6</sup>

The social ethics of the Covenanters thus laid great stress on freedom of conscience; and undoubtedly this was derived from the principle of the Headship of Christ: Thus, in the long run, as is generally conceded by balanced and unprejudiced historians, the Covenanting struggle spelt civil liberty, and freedom of conscience for the individual man.<sup>7</sup> It has been maintained, of course, that

<sup>4</sup> *Faithful Contendings*, p. 399.

<sup>5</sup> *Ib.*, p. 395.

<sup>6</sup> It should be remembered that it was as a community at war with the other factions in the state that the Cameronians felt themselves to be in a position to state their terms to the new government before according it military support (*Faithful Contendings*, pp. 398-404). It was in the same capacity they served upon the curates in the south-west the notice to quit (p. 375), and raised their own army and appointed officers (p. 376).

<sup>7</sup> It is of some interest to note that the principle of the Headship of Christ is not out of harmony with the more advanced social and political thought of the present day. Such a principle is obviously irreconcilable with the ideal of what Dean Inge calls the "god-state," and is naturally distasteful to historians and writers of conservative and reactionary sympathies. But the theory of the omnipotent State is going out of favour. "The modern State has discredited itself," says Dean Inge, "by the over-weening claims made for it" (*Outspoken Essays*, II., p. 137). The problem of to-day is rather to devise adequate checks on state power. The concept of a League of Nations implies the voluntary limitation of absolute sovereignty on the part of the State. As to the power of the State in internal

the Covenanters claimed only freedom of conscience for themselves while denying it to others ; and this contention is not altogether groundless. At first sight it is difficult to reconcile intolerance in matters theological with the principle of the freedom of the individual conscience. And so the question arises, did the doctrine of the Headship of Christ spell ultimately universal freedom of conscience, which involves toleration ? Had the principle of the Headship of Christ been carried to its logical conclusion, it would undoubtedly have done so. For the Headship ought to mean Christ's absolute supremacy and complete obedience to His moral law, which includes love and kindness even to enemies, and cannot be said to sanction anything approaching to persecution ; but the Covenanters were afraid of the implicates of their own principle, and thus in practice they limited it in scope and application.

I. Firstly, they limited the principle by their bondage to the letter of Scripture. The theory of verbal inspiration which they held in common with Calvinists in general, resulted in an equal value being placed on both Testaments. The equality of the Testaments was in many respects beneficial in its effects, for there can be no doubt that the Old Testament was a potent force in producing the opposition to tyranny ; but on the other hand, the

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affairs, Mr Ramsay MacDonald writes, " Let there be no confusion between the State and society, and between the State and other organs in society. The State is but one of the organs of the community, all of which together form the organism Society. The Church is an organisation of the community for moral and spiritual ends " (*Socialism and Government*, I., p. 37). Again, Mr MacDonald says, " There is a limit imposed on state authority by reason. . . . The citizen always holds in reserve the right to rebel, and whether he uses that right or not is purely a matter of expediency. Or it may be put in this way: State authority belongs to the order of reason, and when it violates that order it invites a challenge " (*Parliament and Democracy*, pp. 32, 33). Mr Bertrand Russell, too, welcomes " all strong organisations which embody a sectional public opinion " as " safeguards of liberty and opportunities for initiative " (*Principles of Social Reconstruction*, p. 73). From the religious point of view, Sir George Adam Smith likewise justifies the right of resistance on occasion in the interests of true religion (*Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament*, p. 271).

assumption of intra-Biblical uniformity and equality ruled out a genuine Headship of Christ over Scripture. Consequently, to those who seemed to belittle the Scriptures, they were bitterly hostile. They had other counts against the Romanists, but one was the fact that the Scriptures were apparently less honoured in the Roman Church. And the truculence of their attitude to the Quakers can only be understood when we realise that to the latter the Scriptures were strictly subordinate to the conscience. Livingstone, in the earlier stages of the persecution, spoke of Quakerism as outside the bounds of Christianity,<sup>8</sup> and likened them to betrayers of Christ.<sup>9</sup> Shields at the close designated them the "blasphemous Quakers."<sup>10</sup> Fraser of Brea alone seems to have made an effort to understand the Quaker position; and even he, while favourably impressed by many of the tenets of Quakerism, concluded the principle of the inward testimony of the Spirit to be a "device of Satan" to cast off the Scriptures.<sup>11</sup> The attitude to Scripture not only issued in Bibliolatry, but it engendered intolerance towards those who adopted different standpoints; and the bondage to the Old Testament imparted a tone of harshness towards those who were conceived to be the enemies of God.<sup>12</sup>

II. In common with other seventeenth-century Protestants, the Covenanters were more or less in bondage to the orthodox theology. Protestantism had carried over from the Roman Church the belief that heresy was a moral offence.<sup>13</sup> And in addition, as already remarked, local circumstances conspired to render the Covenanters specially

<sup>8</sup> *Select Biographies*, I., p. 253.

<sup>9</sup> *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 628 (sacramental discourse).

<sup>10</sup> *Ib.*, p. 616.

<sup>11</sup> *Select Biographies*, II., p. 192. The Quaker position of non-resistance was likewise misunderstood, and the apparent indifference of the Quakers to the designs of the Roman Catholics lent itself to a sinister interpretation.

<sup>12</sup> It was an important factor in sharpening the antagonism to witchcraft.

<sup>13</sup> "Most of the reformers continued to retain, in a greater or less degree," as so orthodox a theologian as Cunningham has pointed out, "the sentiments in which the Church of Rome had instructed them."—*Hist. Theology*, II., p. 563.

suspicious of liberal views in theology.<sup>14</sup> On this point there was complete unanimity. Heterodoxy, in any shape or form, was thought to be of the devil. One of the sanest, most tolerant, and most consistently Christian of the Covenanting leaders could say in dealing with the Arminian controversy: "Election is mutable, as damnable heretics say, but, thanks be to God, we have not so learned Christ."<sup>15</sup> A clear-thinking layman could speak of Anabaptism as, equally with Prelacy, a device of Satan.<sup>16</sup> Brown expressed his regret that no physical restraint was put upon Papists;<sup>17</sup> and in the later stages of the persecution the Society people kept a day of fasting, humiliation, and prayer for certain causes, among which were specified not only the introduction and toleration of Popery, but the "free liberty granted to Quakerism."<sup>18</sup> Cameron denounced Socinianism, Arminianism, and Quakerism as "derogatory to the sufferings of Christ and His declarative glory in the world."<sup>19</sup> Renwick spoke of the Arminian attitude as a "great iniquity."<sup>20</sup> Shields went still farther. "Suppose," he said, "a Papist, Quaker, Socinian, or Arminian should lay down his life for that which is mere truth and duty, yet they could not be accounted martyrs for Christ, because they are heretical as to the most part of the fundamental truth of the gospel of Christ."<sup>21</sup>

III. The doctrine of the Headship was limited in its application also by certain deductions from the theory of the Church. As already noted, it was held in common with the Romanists that there was but one visible Church, of which the National Churches were provinces. The Reformation was viewed as the process of cleansing the visible Church of its corruptions, and it was held that

<sup>14</sup> *Vide* Chapter IV., pp. 56-57.

<sup>15</sup> Blackadder, Sermon in Appendix to *Faithful Contendings*, p. 96.

<sup>16</sup> Sir James Stewart, *Jus Populi Vindicatum*, p. 233.

<sup>17</sup> *History of Indulgence*, p. 199.

<sup>18</sup> *Faithful Contendings*, p. 307.

<sup>19</sup> *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 435.

<sup>20</sup> Renwick's *Sermons*, p. 583.

<sup>21</sup> *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 605.

only the circumstances of the times prevented the assembling of a Protestant Œcumenical Council which should pronounce sentence of excommunication on the Roman branch of the Church. The idea of "churches" was quite alien to the thought of the Covenanters. They could not reconcile with their theory of one visible Church—the Kingdom of God upon earth—the existence of rival organisations side by side. Obviously, therefore, the idea of toleration, as we of to-day understand it, was unthinkable. Although Renwick belonged to the close of the period and to the extreme left wing of the Covenanting movement, his attitude to the Toleration granted by James VII. was typical of the position of the Covenanters. "A toleration is always of evil, seeing that which is good cannot be tolerated, but ought freely to be owned and countenanced as such. . . . To give toleration to idolatry is a great iniquity." <sup>22</sup>

Throughout the whole period the Covenanting position—as formulated in the National Covenant and more explicitly in the Solemn League and Covenant—was that the visible Church must be purged of error—"popery, prelacy, superstition, heresy, schism, profaneness, and whatsoever shall be found contrary to sound doctrine and the power of godliness." <sup>23</sup> And even in the democratic and radical Queensferry Paper there is a resolve expressed to endeavour to accomplish "the extirpation of all the works of darkness and the relics of idolatry and superstition." <sup>24</sup> The regulative and prohibitive clauses of the Covenants which crystallised this spirit and imposed this policy upon the Covenanting party acted as a kind of dead-weight upon ethical progress in this direction, and retarded the growth of the idea of toleration. In fairness

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<sup>22</sup> Renwick's *Sermons*, p. 593.

<sup>23</sup> The Solemn League and Covenant, Article II.—*Treasury of the Scottish Covenant*, p. 99.

<sup>24</sup> Wodrow, III., p. 208. A glimmering of toleration is to be found in the advice of Shields to Renwick's critics, to "contain themselves within Gamaliel's boundaries—that if this work be of men it will come to nought, but if it be of God it cannot be overthrown."—*Life of Renwick in Biographia Presbyteriana*, Vol. II., p. 49.

to the Covenanters, however, it should be remembered that the Roman Church had the same concept of one universal Church, and was much more ruthless in the suppression of what it called heresy and schism. Events on the Continent bore testimony to the peril of Roman persecution, and the Covenanters doubtless felt the necessity of preventing the popish party from gaining a footing within their branch of the visible Church; and they had reason to fear prelacy, not only because of its ecclesiastical affinities with popery,<sup>25</sup> but because the prelatic system of ecclesiastical government had been and was being used by the Stewarts in pursuance of their policy of the establishment of an absolute monarchy.

Dodds, in his appreciation of the Covenanters, distinguished between what he called their exclusivism and their universality, between "something that was local and special and breathed the imperfections of the particular age" and "something universal and perpetual, and interesting to all mankind, so long as there shall be such things as the true love of liberty and the free pure exercise of religious belief and worship."<sup>26</sup> To the former category belong the bondage to Scripture and subservience to dogma, the spirit of fear and the resulting intolerance. To the latter belongs the great conception of the Headship of Christ, the master-concept of the social ethic of the Covenanting movement. This principle was surely the supreme contribution of the Covenanters to ethical progress, for the Headship, pressed to its logical conclusion—a Headship of Christ over the Bible as well as the Church, over social as well as ecclesiastical life—spells not only freedom of conscience but also the establishment of the Kingdom of God upon earth and the ethical upliftment of the human race.

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<sup>25</sup> "The prelate was the first step-stone of the greatest enemy to Christ. I mean the Antichrist—a Pope in seed."—Fraser, *Lawfulness of Separation*, p. 7.

<sup>26</sup> *Fifty Years' Struggle of the Scottish Covenanters*, pp. 392-393.

## APPENDIX

### *A Note on the Sources*

THE chief authorities consulted in the preparation of this work are as follows :—

#### HISTORIES AND MEMOIRS.

Kirkton, *History of the Church of Scotland*.

Wodrow, *History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland*.

Law, *Memorials*.

Burnet, *History of His Own Time* (edition 1838, Smith, London).

*Lauderdale Papers* (ed. by Airy).

Mackenzie, *Memoirs of the Affairs of Scotland*.

Fountainhall, *Historical Notices* (ed. by Laing).

*Acts of Parliament of Scotland* (ed. by Thomas Thomson), Vols. VII. and VIII.

Alexander Brodie, *Diary*.

Defoe, *Memoirs of the Church of Scotland*.

Patrick Walker, *Biographia Presbyteriana* (new edition, entitled *Six Saints of the Covenant*, ed. by Hay Fleming).

A True and Short Deduction of the Wrestlings of the Church of Scotland, in *Naphtali*.

Brown, *History of the Indulgence*.

——— *Apologetical Relation*.

Shields, *A Hind Let Loose* (Historical Section).

——— *Life of Renwick* (*Biographia Presbyteriana*, II.).

——— *Relation of His Sufferings*.

——— *The Scots Inquisition*.

*Faithful Contendings Displayed*.

*Select Biographies* (Wodrow Society Publications).

Blackadder, *Memoirs* (ed. by Crichton).

*Memoirs of Veitch and Brysson* (ed. by M'Crie).

Row, *Memoirs of Blair* (Wodrow Society Publications).

*Memoirs of Veitch, Hog, etc.*

*Memoirs of Ker of Kersland*.

HISTORIES AND MEMOIRS—*continued*.

Howie, *Scots Worthies* (editions by Wylie and Anderson and by W. H. Carslaw).

*Life of Alexander Reid, A Scottish Covenanter.*

*Miscellaneous Writings of John Spreull* (ed. by J. W. Burns).

## TRACTS AND CONTROVERSIAL LITERATURE.

Stewart, Introduction to *Naphtali*.

——— *Jus Populi Vindicatum*.

Brown, *The Banders Disbanded*.

M'Ward, *Earnest Contendings for the Faith*.

——— *Poor Man's Cup of Cold Water*.

——— *Against the Cess*.

Fraser, *Lawfulness of Separation from Corrupt Ministers and Churches*.

Dickson, *Warning Against Compliance with the Indulgence*.

Renwick and Shields, *Informatory Vindication*.

Shields, *A Hind Let Loose*.

——— *Enquiry into Church Communion*.

## TESTIMONIES.

Testimonies in *Naphtali* and in the *Cloud of Witnesses*, reprinted with additional matter under the title of *The Testimonies of the Scots Worthies*.

Testimonies reprinted in Wodrow's *History*.

## LETTERS.

The Letters in Wodrow's *History*, Blackadder's *Memoirs*, *Earnest Contendings*, *Faithful Contendings*, *Select Biographies*, *Life and Letters of James Renwick* (ed. by Carslaw). Letter of M'Ward in *The Bass Rock*, p. 323, and of Blackadder in M'Crie's *Sketches of Church History*, II. (Appendix, p. 303). Letter of Dickson in *The Bass Rock*, pp. 345-346.

## DOCUMENTS.

The National Covenant and the Solemn League and Covenant, reprinted in *The Covenants and the Covenanters* and other works. The Declarations issued at Hamilton and Rutherglen (1679), The Sanquhar Declaration (1680), The Queensferry Paper (1680), The Torwood Excommunication (1680), The Lanark Declaration (1682), The Apologetical Declaration (1684), and other documents reprinted in Wodrow, in Johnston's *Treasury of the Scottish Covenant*, and elsewhere.

## APOLOGETIC, EXPOSITORY, AND DEVOTIONAL LITERATURE.

Fleming, *Fulfilling of the Scripture*.

Hutcheson, *Exposition of the Book of Job*.

Guthrie, *The Christian's Great Interest*.

*Note*.—Hutcheson's *Exposition of Job* alone of his works falls within the period. Guthrie's *Christian's Great Interest* may be reckoned as belonging to the period, though published in 1659.

## SERMONS.

The sermons may be grouped as follows :—

1. The collections of the two indulged preachers, Hutcheson and Wedderburn—Hutcheson, *Forty-five Sermons on the CXXX. Psalm*; and Wedderburn, *The Believer's Privileges* and *David's Testament Opened Up*.
2. The sermon of Livingstone in *Select Biographies*, I.
3. The sermon of Guthrie in *Select Biographies*, II.
4. The sermon of Blackadder appended to the *Memoirs*.
5. The sermon of Fraser on *Prelacy an Idol*.
6. The sermons collected and edited by Howie of Lochgoin, which fall into two groups: (i.) those appended to *Faithful Contendings Displayed*, by King, Kid, Welch, Blackadder, Semple, and Dickson; and (ii.) those first published in 1779, and reprinted in 1880 under the title of *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, ed. by Kerr. This includes sermons by William Guthrie, Bruce, Welwood, Cameron, Cargill, Peden, Alexander Shields, Livingstone, Welch, and John Guthrie.
7. The collection of sermons “preached on the mountains and muirs of Scotland in the hottest time of the late Persecution,” by James Renwick, first published in 1749 by William Wilson of Douglas, from notes taken down by hearers.
8. Sermons of Guthrie and Cargill published for the first time by Carslaw in his lives of Guthrie and Cargill in *Heroes of the Covenant*.

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